WORLD SOCCER®

The essential football magazine

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE THE CONTENDERS

The experts' guide to Europe's best teams

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- The new seasons in Italy and Spain, club by club
- Pavel Nedved
- Zinedine Zidane
- Gilberto Silva
- Franz Beckenbauer

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SEPTEMBER 2005 VOL 45 NO 13

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SEPTEMBER 2005

WORLD SOCCER comment

IT IS NOW 13 years since the European Cup mutated into the Champions League. In that time, it has grown in size and stature to become what it is today – the world's premier club competition, albeit one where, for most clubs, the taking part is more important than the winning.

The financial rewards on offer to all participants mean that the status of the Champions League is undisputed – no matter what plans FIFA may have for the forthcoming Club World Championship in Japan. Indeed, the very fact that FIFA wants to organise its own tournament for clubs, though scaled back from the original proposals, is a recognition that UEFA has made an outstanding success of the Champions League.

This season's Champions League will be played out against the backdrop of the countdown to the 2006 World Cup. Europe remains where the power and glory lies in world football – even if South America continues to produce the game's best players. Those individuals who shine in this season's Champions League will also be expected to repeat the feat in June and July next year in stadiums across Germany.

Despite the criticism of the Champions League for the way it has exacerbated the polarisation of wealth in European football, the great irony is that the modern-day competition is far harder to win than the knockout European Cup. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first European Cup match, the competition retains its capacity to surprise – from Liverpool's astonishing victory (and Milan's capitulation) in Istanbul in May, to the most recent qualifying successes of Switzerland's Thun and Artmedia Bratislava of Slovakia.

One fallout from the success of the Champions League has been the increasing marginalisation of the UEFA Cup, a process which last year's half-hearted re-organisation has failed to halt. The sheer size of the Champions League, even in its new, improved, slimmed-down format, has made all other competitions seem second-rate.

This month, we focus on the 16 automatic qualifiers for this season's competition. On only three occasions in the 13-year history of the Champions League has the winner not come from this group of automatic qualifiers – Manchester United in 1999, Milan in 2003 and Liverpool in 2005. So it's a fair bet that the victors in Paris on May 17 next year will come from one of the 16 teams we feature this month.

From the contenders to the pretenders. Next month, we will turn our attention to the 16 teams who have successfully negotiated the qualifying rounds. We will also be announcing details of an exclusive Travel Club for *World Soccer* readers. Further information can also be found on our website, www.worldsoccer.com.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

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DYNAMO DITCH COACH

UKRAINE: Leonid Buriak was fired by Kyiv Dynamo after the humiliating 3-2 aggregate defeat by Thun of Switzerland in the Champions League qualifiers. **Page 64**

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In...Julio Baptista displays his new shirt after signing for Real Madrid

● 06/08/05

Out...Luis Figo shows he really has left Real Madrid by joining Internazionale

● 07/08/05

Super Chelsea...the English champions celebrate victory over Arsenal in the Community Shield

HEADLINERS

ZINEDINE ZIDANE

Zizou's return to the international fold has been ecstatically welcomed

THE AWE IN WHICH Zinedine Zidane is held in his native France has never been better illustrated than by the reaction to his recent decision to return to international duty.

Zizou's announcement – via his own website – that he was reversing his August 2004 decision to quit *Les Bleus* was greeted with near hysteria. It was such big news that newspapers ran radio adverts about their own coverage of the story, in particular the debate about whether Zidane really can now lead the national team to next year's World Cup in Germany, since they have laboured through the qualifying campaign so far. And there was page after page of analysis in the football press, almost universally welcoming Zizou's return in ecstatic terms.

"[France coach] Raymond Domenech can once again rely on a player who's capable of bringing everybody together in his slipstream; players, supporters and simple followers of the game alike," trumpeted the leader in *France Football*.

"This almost surreal decision lies at the crossroads of a multitude of interests," was the assessment of *L'Equipe* in its typically florid style. "Those of a player with withdrawal symptoms, of a fragile team, a weakened football federation and all those who have an interest in seeing *Les Bleus* qualify for the 2006 World Cup."

But perhaps the most over-the-top comments came from Zidane himself. Having first stated, quite reasonably, that he'd realised while on his summer holidays that he didn't have a lot of time left as a top professional footballer and thought he should make the most of it, the Real Madrid midfielder quickly started advancing some far more bizarre reasons about why he was back in the international fold.

"One night I woke up at three in the morning and spoke with someone," he claimed. "Even I can't explain this meeting. This person exists, but comes from a long way away. In the hours that followed I was all alone with her and that was when I took the decision to return. It was as if I had a revelation."

Weird stuff, certainly, and some were quick to suggest a more prosaic reason for ZZ's return: the fact that megabucks national team sponsors such as Adidas and Orange are insistent on getting a return on their investment. That means France taking part in next year's World Cup in Germany come hell or high water.

Zidane dismisses that as utter rubbish. "I'm a free man," he says. "The decision came from my soul, my heart, my body, my everything."

"Who cares?" says virtually all of France. "Just so long as he's there." And he didn't disappoint in his first game back, scoring France's second goal in the 3-0 friendly defeat of Ivory Coast in Montpellier on August 17.

> **'The decision came from my soul, my heart, my body, my everything'**

"What I'm going to say may sound over the top, but it's the truth," said Thierry Henry. "In France everyone knows that God exists and that he's returned to the France team.

"God is back! What else can I say. I saw it on French television and I read it in the French papers; it's everywhere. He's back!"

And with both Claude Makelele and Lilian Thuram also making international U-turns, it looks like the country's insipid World Cup qualifying campaign is finally about to catch fire.

Howard Johnson

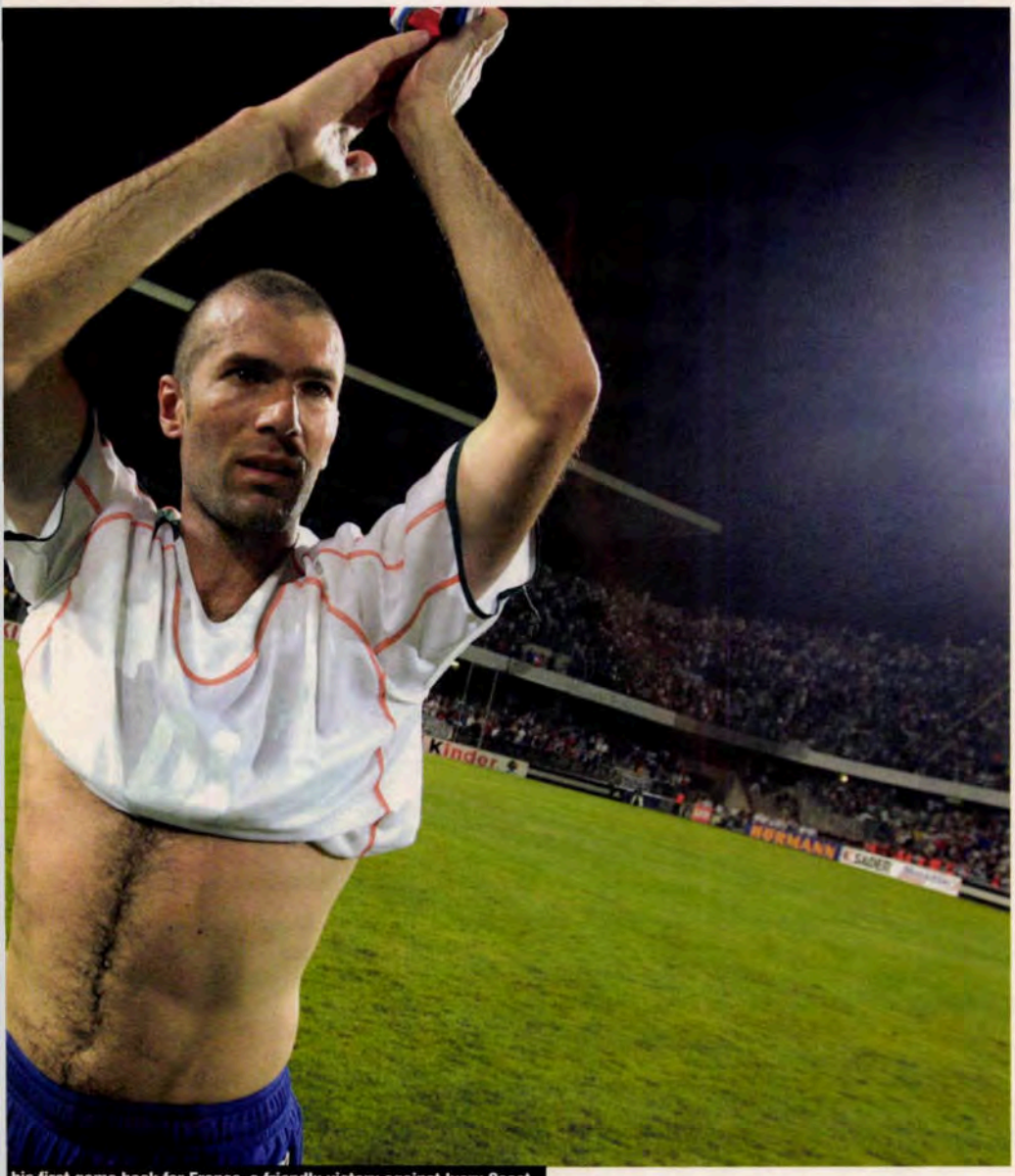
Happy clappy...Zidane salutes his adoring fans at the end of

● 09/08/05

Jumping with joy...Luciano Figueroa shows his delight after putting Villarreal ahead against Everton in the Champions League qualifiers

● 09/08/05

Three view...the Glazer brothers, Bryan, Avram and Joel, take in Manchester United's home Champions League tie against Debrecen



his first game back for France, a friendly victory against Ivory Coast

Numbers game

£107million...

the size of the insurance policy taken out by German organisers in the event of a cancellation of next year's World Cup

£62,000...

the amount raised for Ferenc Puskas by a benefit match between Real Madrid and a Hungary XI.

£70,500...

the amount spent by Real Madrid players on hotels and other expenses for the above match.

£884,451...

the match fee claimed by Real Madrid for the above match.

4...

the number of relatives – aunt, uncle, two cousins – lost in the recent Cypriot air crash by Anorthosis Famagusta captain Nicos Nicolaou, who still turned out in the Champions League against Rangers.

£13,200...

the fine imposed by UEFA on CSKA Sofia for racist chanting aimed at Liverpool striker Djibril Cisse during a Champions League qualifier.

£10.8million...

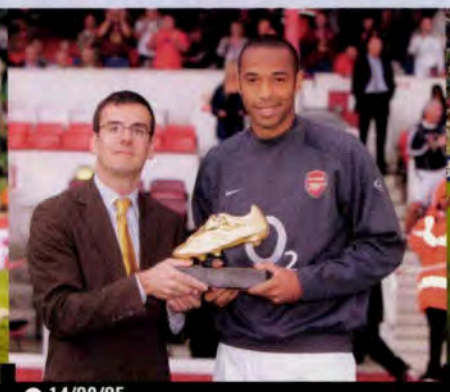
the fee paid (in instalments) by Inter to Real Madrid for Argentina defender Walter Samuel.

3...

the number of games Samuel was banned for after spitting at Juventus midfielder Pavel Nedved during the Italian Super Cup.

● 13/08/05

Up in the air...Ronaldinho has a shot during Barca's first leg win over Betis in the Spanish Super Cup



● 14/08/05

Prize guy...Thierry Henry is presented with the ESM Golden Shoe for 2004-05 by *World Soccer* editor Gavin Hamilton

● 14/08/05

United front...players from the two Koreas (South in red) carry a "reunification" flag ahead of their friendly game in Seoul

HEADLINERS

THUN

Unheralded Swiss side preparing to rub shoulders with Europe's elite

NINE YEARS AGO, FC Thun were playing in the third tier of Swiss football in front of average crowds of 100. This month, they will join the ranks of Europe's elite clubs when they compete in the group stage of the UEFA Champions League.

Victories over Kyiv Dynamo (3-2 on aggregate) and Malmo (4-0) in the second and third qualifying rounds respectively ensured that Thun reached the last 32.

It is by far the greatest achievement in the club's 107-year history. The previous highlight was reaching the 1955 Swiss Cup Final, which they lost 3-1 to La Chaux-de-Fonds.

Since returning to the Swiss top flight in 2002, the club, from a small lakeside town of the same name, have confounded the critics with two top-three finishes, including taking the runners-up spot behind Basle last season.

> **'It's crazy that a bunch of nobodies like us could reach Europe's top club competition'**
>
> *Thun president Kurt Weder*

With an annual budget of just £2.4million, coach Urs "Longo" Schonenberger, who succeeded Grasshopper-bound Hanspeter Latour in January, has been forced to do some cheap wheeling and dealing. A mixture of foreign imports and Swiss journeymen discarded by the likes of Grasshopper and Basle have been brought in and moulded into a hard-working team.

Striker Mauro Lustrinelli, who scored 20 goals last season and recently celebrated a call-up to the Swiss national side, failed to make the grade at Grasshopper and Basle, among others. Captain Andres Gerber is another cast-off, having spent three seasons with Grasshopper and Young Boys.

Surprise, surprise...Tiago Bernardi (right) is congratulated by David Pallas after scoring against Malmo

This season, Thun have turned to Brazil for inspiration, bringing in three new signings. Two of them, Tiago Bernardi and Adriano, were on target against Malmo.

"Of course it's absolutely crazy that a bunch of nobodies like us could take part in Europe's biggest club competition, and it will open up some new financial possibilities," said club president Kurt Weder. "But we will still have to keep our feet on the ground and invest any extra revenues wisely."

The top priority will be improving the 10,350-capacity Lachen stadium. It has fewer than 1,000 seats and Thun have been able to use it for League matches only after they were granted special dispensation by the Swiss League.

A club record crowd of 31,243 watched the second leg of the third qualifying round against Malmo at the new Wankdorf stadium in Berne, where Thun will now host Champions League football for the first time.

● 17/08/05

No stopping them...Jon Dahl Tomasson scores Denmark's second goal in the 4-1 demolition of England in Copenhagen

● 17/08/05

Heading for a fall...Gregg Berhalter trips over Dwight Yorke of Trinidad & Tobago during the USA's 1-0 World Cup qualifying win

● 17/08/05

Captain comeback...Zinedine Zidane returns to international football, leading out France for the friendly against Ivory Coast

WS WORLD SOCCER Brian Glanville

...on England's Copenhagen disaster... and the latest shenanigans at the Football Association

DIM DAYS INDEED for English football. Humiliation in Copenhagen. Fatuous pronouncements from the new chief executive of the FA. Sven Goran Eriksson reopening, it seems, Fariagate, after one more passive, uninspirational performance on the bench in Denmark.

What of England, dire, pathetic, inept in Copenhagen? They themselves had no midfield player of the creative quality of Claus Jensen. How easily he went past an inept defence to set up a Danish goal.

Eriksson could hardly be blamed for the drab performances of his two key central midfielders, Steven Gerrard and Frank Lampard. But to use on the flanks two non-wingers in David Beckham (no pace, no capacity to beat the back) and Joe Cole (essentially a very talented inside-forward) is to give hostages to fortune.

Even more so in the shape of the hopelessly erratic David James, who should have been drummed out of the regiment after his dreadful performance a year earlier in Vienna, and who duly gave absurd goals away.

'David James should have been drummed out of the regiment after his dreadful performance a year earlier in Vienna, and he duly gave absurd goals away'

All this was compounded by Eriksson's penchant for using as many substitutes as the present rules allow, six, all brought on in the second half, utterly unbalancing the team. Even if, Wayne Rooney honourably apart, England had hardly sparkled in the first half, at least they had gone in all square at half-time. If James proved predictably inept, then so did Glen Johnson, the guilty defender on so avoidable a goal.

Then Brian Barwick, the TV executive who has now succeeded the disastrous Mark Palios as FA chief executive, seemingly felt it was time he made his voice heard. How much better had he kept silent, allowing us to retain our illusions about him.

He expressed, heaven help us, his faith in Eriksson, telling us that the fact he and the Swede got on so well was "significant". Of what, other than his dubious judgement? Remember that Palios and Eriksson got on so well for a time that, when Eriksson surreptitiously talked to Chelsea, and appeared to be considering a defection, Palios promptly raised his salary to a ludicrous £4million a year.

Passive in defeat...Eriksson, with assistant Steve McClaren

THE Terry Burns report was always likely to excoriate the Football Association, and can you wonder? The FA's latest faux pas, the initial refusal to pay out the contract, in full, of youth coaching organiser Les Reed, seemed to make a court case inevitable – and unwinnable – unless it did pay up.

You do tend to wonder if this could be a somewhat misguided attempt to make up what was more or less the same money – the bagatelle of some £600,000-plus – that was inexplicably awarded to former FA chief executive Mark Palios. Having become sexually involved with the equally ineffable Faria Alam, Palios compounded his behaviour by getting the FA's then head of public relations, Colin Gibson, to try to persuade the *News of the World* to keep his superior out of the frame, at the expense of the England team manager, Sven Goran Eriksson. If ever there seemed a cut and dried case of giving an employee the bum's rush, this was surely it.

As it transpired, the FA shelled out £600,000. This is something that Burns might still well want to look into. By the time you read this, I assume the FA will have climbed down. But what a way to run a railroad.

● 18/08/05

Spurs to Sevilla...Fredi Kanoute arrives in Spain

● 19/08/05

At last...Michael Essien signs for Chelsea from Lyon after a summer-long saga

● 20/08/05

Trophy time...Inter celebrate victory against Juventus in the Italian Super Cup

GOOD MONTH FOR...

Record breaker...Borgetti

Jared Borgetti... became Mexico's top international scorer when hitting his 36th goal in the 2-0 defeat of Costa Rica in the World Cup qualifiers.

Zimbabwe... the national team players all received plots of land from the government in recognition of their victory over Zambia in the COSAFA Castle Cup Final.

Lyn Oslo...the Norwegian club are preparing to welcome back Nigerian teenager John Obi Mikel after FIFA's dispute resolution chamber ruled he should return to them rather than pursue his transfer to Chelsea.

BAD MONTH FOR...

Lionel Messi...Argentina's wonderkid was harshly sent off two minutes into his debut appearance, as a substitute, for the senior national side. Messi was following in the footsteps of Diego Maradona by making his debut against Hungary.

Juan Sebastian Veron...the Internazionale midfielder was again overlooked by Argentina coach Jose Pekerman for the Hungary friendly. Veron has not played for Argentina since Pekerman took over.

Ardian Gashi...the Valerenga midfielder could not play in his team's Champions League qualifying first leg against Club Brugge after being sentenced to 18 days in prison for a speeding offence. The jail term began on the day of the game.

Off in no time...Messi

Notes & quotes

"For two months we paid a player who refused to do his job."
Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas aims a parting shot at Michael Essien after the Ghanaian midfielder finally moves to Chelsea.

"I've experienced hunger. I was brought up in poverty."
Ronaldinho takes on the role of UN ambassador in the world food campaign.

"The face-to-face of the year."
A trailer for Argentinian TV talk show *The Night of the Ten*, a programme with Diego Maradona in the role of presenter and Pele as his special guest.

"Thanks, Spain. Since coming here nine years ago, the Spanish people have always made me feel at home."
Roberto Carlos becomes a Spanish citizen.

Gain in Spain...Roberto Carlos

"If I score against Bayern, I'll take off all my kit and run nude on the pitch."
Borussia Monchengladbach striker Giovane Elber promises a novel celebration against his old club. Unfortunately for him, he doesn't get the chance to streak, as Bayern win 3-0.

"My partner Isabella knows how I am. I've never promised her fidelity."
Romario – a serial womaniser and proud of it.

northern rock

GOAL! THE MOVIE

War of words

Coaches square up as the national team cruise towards the World Cup

BRIAN HOMEWOOD in Mexico City

AFTER MEXICO beat Costa Rica 2-0 in August to virtually clinch their place at next year's World Cup finals, coach Ricardo Lavolpe said he hoped the critics would give him and his team a break.

Fat chance. Not even the loudest mariachi band would be capable of drowning out the sound of internal bickering that is plaguing Mexican football less than a year before the finals.

Given the national team's recent performances, you would expect Lavolpe and the federation (FMF) to be living in harmony. In the past 12 months, Mexico have beaten Argentina (in last year's Copa America) and Brazil (this year's Confederations Cup) and cruised through CONCACAF's marathon World Cup qualifying competition with 13 wins and a draw in 14 games.

But none of this has softened any of Lavolpe's army of detractors, led by Hugo Sanchez, the best player the country has ever produced and now coach of Pumas UNAM, whom he has led to two national championships.

Sanchez has cultivated a bitter rivalry with Lavolpe since the pair were on opposing sides during their playing days in the 1980s and never misses a chance to launch a verbal assault on the man he refers to as "The Other One". The latest came after Mexico lost to guest side Colombia in the quarter-finals of the Gold Cup, the CONCACAF regional championship, in July. Sanchez reiterated his belief that Lavolpe should be sacked and replaced by...Sanchez, saying: "I hope they get it right and don't hesitate in making this change. One year is enough for the changes to take effect, to win back the harmony and the motivation, and to bring back the dream."

Lavolpe has also been under fire from a number of newspaper columnists as well as players who have been left out of the squad,

Shouting match... coach Lavolpe has endured fierce criticism despite good recent results

such as Guadalajara's Adolfo Bautista. "This is not the national team of Mexico; it's the team of [Lavolpe's] friends," said "Bofo", who also criticised the inclusion of Brazil-born midfielder Antonio Naelson. "If we have a look at the goals he misses, we'll see that he is not as effective as I could be."

The team have done their best to close ranks and ignore the sniping, although clearly they have been afraid to criticise Sanchez – partly because they have huge respect for him and partly because he could be their new boss in the not-too-distant future.

Rafael Marquez said the criticism made him sad, while Jared Borgetti, who became the country's all-time leading scorer with his 36th international goal against Costa Rica, said: "At first, I got tired of it, but now it just makes me laugh."

Lavolpe's defence

Lavolpe points out that in his three years in charge, he has turned a number of previously little-known youngsters – such as Carlos Salcido, Gonzalo Pineda, Mario Mendez, Luis Perez and Francisco Fonseca – into proven internationals. "It's not like it was three years ago," he says. "We have got a much more competitive team; our performances at the Confederations Cup were a talking point, especially in Europe and among the specialised media, who understand these things. The trouble is that Mexico is a difficult country."

And it could get even more difficult very soon. The owners of the professional clubs are due to meet in early September, when they could decide to vote FMF president Alberto De la Torre out of office for his handling of the Salvador Carmona-Aaron Galindo doping affair at the Confederations Cup. If he goes, Lavolpe could be sucked away in his wake.

Several club presidents are furious with the FMF, which was fined £322,000 for apparently trying to cover up the fact that the two Cruz Azul players had been sent home from the Confederations Cup after testing positive for nandrolone shortly before the competition started. The FMF initially said they had been sent home for indiscipline, and changed its tune only under severe pressure from FIFA.

'This is not the national team of Mexico; it's the team of Lavolpe's friends'

Dropped international forward Adolfo Bautista has a go at the coach

Snubbed...Blanco

Cuauhtemoc Blanco, who did his World Cup chances no good at all by pulling out of the Confederations Cup squad and going on holiday instead, joined the critics of national coach Ricardo Lavolpe after being snubbed for the August World Cup qualifier against Costa Rica. "Lavolpe didn't have big enough trousers to pick me, it's as simple as that," said "Temoc".

Lavolpe retorted: "First of all, my trousers are perfectly big enough. I believe that Blanco is a great player, but my team does not depend on just one player. I think it would be illogical to ignore the effort the players have made to be here and it would be a lack of respect to them if I left one of them out and brought in Blanco."

Jose Antonio Garcia, president of Atlante, claimed that the FMF did not have the money to pay the FIFA fine. "They asked for money from the bank because the FMF is in debt, despite what De la Torre says," he said.

Others who could go against De la Torre include Jorge Vergara, the flamboyant president and owner of Guadalajara, and Elias Ayub, president of Pumas, who is fed up with what he sees as a campaign against coach Sanchez by the FMF.

Before the opening championship got under way last month, Sanchez promised to stop his familiar protests with referees which have earned him more than a dozen red cards in his coaching career. Yet, just two games in, Sanchez was dismissed again, though television replays suggested he did nothing to merit a sending-off. The FMF then rubbed it in further by fining him £3,888. Sanchez jibed that it was an attempt to raise money to pay the FIFA fine.

Meanwhile, Galindo and Carmona were both banned for a year, although the pair then appealed to the government-run Sports Arbitration and Appeals Commission. The commission provisionally overturned the ban until the appeal was heard, which quickly set off the alarm bells at the FMF as this constituted outside interference in the federation, an offence FIFA generally punishes by suspending the country until the problem is sorted out. Not surprisingly, Cruz Azul decided not to field the pair, who then agreed to withdraw the appeal and go through the football channels.

On the field, Cruz Azul overcame the absence of Carmona and Galindo as well as their Argentinian coach, Ruben Omar Romano, who is still being held for ransom by kidnappers. With assistant Isaac Mizrahi at the helm, the Blue Machine won their first three matches. Uruguayan striker Richard Nunez, signed from Atletico Madrid after an unhappy six months, scored four goals on his debut as Cruz Azul hammered Tecos UAG 5-1.

Toluca also got off to a good start under new coach Americo Gallego, the Argentinian 1978 World Cup midfielder who has already led River Plate, Independiente and Newell's Old Boys to League titles in his homeland. The Red Devils led Group 2 after picking up seven points in their first three games.

The big shock came at Guadalajara, where Benjamin Galindo was unceremoniously dumped as coach to became the fourth victim of club owner Vergara's three-year reign. Galindo, it was alleged, did not fit in with the club's philosophy. In other words, it seemed he angered Vergara by backing striker Bautista, who refused to travel to Mexico City to take part in a television programme alongside the owner.

The new boss is Spaniard Xavier Azkargorta, who led Bolivia to the 1994 World Cup but has done precious little coaching since.

Enough is enough

Asian fans stay away as yet more European clubs turn up for money-spinning summer tours

MICHAEL CHURCH in Hong Kong

THEY CAME as before, only this time it was the great, the good and the downright average of European club football that descended on Asia. Trips east by the likes of Manchester United and Real Madrid have become the norm; but this summer the likes of Bolton and Fiorentina travelled as well, swelling the ranks of those looking to milk Asia of its much-wanted cash.

But where previously European teams were greeted with pomp and fanfare, the summer of 2005 could go down as a watershed as Asian football fans finally showed their disinterest in watching half-fit players go through the motions.

Certainly the mystique has gone. Real, who journeyed to Asia for the third summer in a row, were jeered in Beijing – where barely 30,000 fans turned out to see them – after it emerged David Beckham would not be fit enough to play after injuring a hamstring during the club's earlier stint in the United States. A few days later, Man United pulled in a paltry 24,000 in the Chinese capital for a match against Beijing Hyundai.

Even in Hong Kong, where United have a longer history of solid support than most European clubs, there were swathes of empty seats for an exhibition game against the national team. And none of the matches played by Real, United and Bayern Munich in Japan was sold out.

The performances of the European clubs certainly lacked the punch Asian fans are beginning to demand, with both Real and United succumbing in Japan. Real surprisingly lost 3-0 to Tokyo Verdy 1969 just days after Argentinian manager Ossie Ardiles had been fired following a string of defeats, including a 6-0 and a 7-0, that had left Verdy second from bottom of the J.League. United's 2-1 loss to J.League leaders Kashima Antlers was, therefore, considerably less embarrassing.

But while Real were looking disjointed on the field, they were

making some slick moves off it, in the boardrooms of promotion-hungry Asian companies desperate to associate themselves with one of world football's strongest brands. Estimates suggest Real's trip to China, Japan and Thailand netted between £14 and £17million, but what effect travelling around Asia, having already just visited the United States, will have on the players' fitness once the Spanish League season hits full stride is anyone's guess (see panel). The omens are not good, given that Real have won nothing in the past two seasons, when they have also done their pre-season work in Asia.

Picture of solitude ...a fan takes her seat at Man United's poorly attended game against Beijing Hyundai

Bangkok – barely interested

The big clubs were not the only ones hoping the Asian goose would lay its golden egg for them. Bolton, Manchester City and Everton all travelled to a barely interested Bangkok for the Premier League's Asia Trophy.

The previous edition, held two years ago in Malaysia, attracted only a handful of fans to Kuala Lumpur's cavernous Bukit Jalil stadium. And this time round, in Thailand, the fans voted with their feet again. Although attendances were higher, that was largely due to the fact that the Thai Under-23 side were also competing, in order to gain some experience and fitness ahead of the South-east Asian Games. In fact, the dexterity of the home side befuddled many of the Premier League defenders, and had Chanvit Polchivin's side had a cutting edge, the trophy – meaningless as it was – would have stayed in Thailand.

Asian confederation president Mohamed Bin Hammam has expressed his worries about the summer influx. "We are very concerned about European teams coming to Asia and leaving after collecting money without leaving any kind of legacy behind," he said. "They did not do anything to help national associations with any kind of football programmes. We have spoken to the Premier League and they agree that English clubs should not only come to Asia to play and leave... but to play and leave behind some sort of contribution to football in Asia.

"I must stress that we are in no way against English or European teams coming to Asia. Asians love English football. The players are stars and role models for us, so they have a moral obligation as well as a contractual obligation when they play here. They can have a very positive effect on Asian football."

Clubs like Manchester United, Arsenal and Chelsea would beg to differ with Hammam's assessment that the Europeans are putting very little back, having set up summer coaching schools in several Asian territories.

Meanwhile, another row, relating to European football dominating Asia's TV schedules, is almost certain to continue, and Premier League chief executive Richard Scudamore did little to calm the waters during his time in Bangkok for the Asia Trophy games. "Quite simply, if people want to watch it [English football], broadcasters will show it," he said. "Clearly, this is what people want to watch. If people want to watch more, I am the first to say go ahead. It is clearly a market issue. What fans want to watch, they will watch."

FIFA rebuke

These views are clearly at odds with those of FIFA, which voiced its concerns recently. "It's a fact that in some Asian countries they are having to schedule their own matches to take into account the top European leagues, playing their games when there are no live broadcasts from England, Italy or Spain," said general secretary Urs Linsi. "The Asian football associations come to FIFA and complain that something is wrong. This is a question of solidarity. The big clubs are getting stronger and stronger and making life difficult for the smaller countries."

But FIFA would appear to be limited in the action they can take to resolve this TV row. Similarly, the Asian confederation appears powerless to act over the summer influx of European clubs. The onus, instead, lies with the individual national associations in Asia, who sanction the games. More of them need to follow the lead of nations such as Japan, who have improved the level of their own football. Only then can Asian football fans have a realistic and entertaining local alternative in their own backyards.

Tiring trip...Beckham

In an attempt to capture an even larger slice of world football's marketing and merchandising riches, Real Madrid traversed the globe this summer. Their trip took them to the United States for games against Mexico's Guadalajara and Los Angeles Galaxy before jetting to Asia for four games in six days, in China, Japan and Thailand.

But while the coffers have been filled once again, it was no surprise that those who had to carry the burden on the field were left exasperated by it all. "There have been some difficult days," said David Beckham. "Physically, it hasn't been good for the players, although it has been important. The games have been very tough because we haven't been able to train hard and we are still short of fitness. You finish the games very tired and it takes longer than normal to recover, but that is to be expected."

'We are very concerned about European teams taking money but not leaving any legacy in Asia'

Asian confederation president Mohamed Bin Hammam

Protest march...Genoa fans take to the streets after the confirmation of their club's demotion to Serie C1

Football in a fix

A match-rigging scandal and relegation wrangles...it's been a turbulent summer

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

"WHAT THE F* is happening?** What are they doing, that lot? They've just gone and scored a goal. They're mad, they've scored a goal by mistake...Mind you, Vicente [the goalscorer] is like that, but there's still time to set things to rights."

The speaker in the above telephone conversation is an unidentified official from Second Division side Venezia and the man on the other end of the line was Franco Dal Cin, Venezia's managing director. The conversation was recorded as part of a police surveillance operation and took place during the first half of Genoa's 3-2 win over Venezia on June 11, the last day of the Serie B season.

One might have expected Venezia officials to be happy about their side taking an early lead but, clearly, they were not. According to the Italian Football League's disciplinary commission, senior officials at the two clubs had come to an "agreement". Genoa had gone into the game needing a win to be absolutely certain of promotion to Serie A, while Venezia were already relegated.

Phone conversations recorded after the final whistle reveal a cordial exchange of courtesies between Dal Cin and Genoa's president, toy manufacturer Enrico Preziosi. Another tapped conversation after the game records Preziosi's son, Matteo, inviting Giuseppe Pagliara, a Venezia official, to "drop round to the Giochi Preziosi [Preziosi Toys] headquarters so that we can settle things".

Surprise, surprise, when Pagliara left the Giochi Preziosi premises at Cogliate, near Milan, on the following Tuesday, a "routine" police patrol was waiting outside for him. Inside Pagliara's car, the police found a briefcase containing 250,000 euros (£170,000) in cash. Pagliara claimed the money was part payment of a transfer fee for Venezia defender Ruben Maldonado.

In truth, the Genoa-Venezia game had attracted the attention of two Genoa-based public prosecutors long before it took place. Alerted to the possibility of "irregularities", Alberto Lari and Giovanni Arena took the precaution of putting taps on the cell phones of various Venezia and Genoa officials, as well as installing bugs in the rooms of Genoa's Novotel hotel, where the Venezia team stayed before the game.

The game itself would hardly have eased the prosecutors' suspicions. One of the most curious aspects was the half-time substitution of Venezia's Czech goalkeeper Martin Lejsal, allegedly because of an injury. Until then, Lejsal had been largely responsible for keeping Venezia in front until the final seconds of the first half, when Argentinian striker Diego Milito equalised.

Genoa demoted

The investigation initiated by Lari and Arena has dominated the Italian summer. At a League disciplinary commission hearing on July 27, Genoa were demoted from Serie A to Serie C1 (Third Division), Enrico Preziosi, Genoa general manager Stefano Capozucca and Venezia's Dal Cin were all given five-year bans, and Lejsal and team-mate Massimo Borgobello were banned for five and six months respectively. The ruling was upheld at a federation appeals hearing 12 days later and Genoa's demotion confirmed. That decision prompted a mass rally by Genoa fans, angered by the way their club had been treated. It was also at this point that a regional court in Genoa entered the fray, accepting the club's right to appeal the disciplinary commission decision and, in the meantime, ordering the federation not to publish the new season's fixture list.

The federation, in turn, took its case to the Lazio Regional Appeals Tribunal (TAR), a body that under a 2003 law had been designated as the one and only forum for the resolution of sports litigation. TAR ruled the Genoa court had no jurisdiction in the matter and gave the federation the go-ahead to publish the fixture list.

Thus we had a day of total farce on August 16 when, down in Rome, the Federal Council was finally publishing its seasonal calendar while up the road in Genoa, Judge Alvaro Vigotti was issuing warnings to individual councillors of dire consequences if they went ahead. Given that the law is not only an ass, but also often a very slow ass, the federation could hardly be blamed for wanting to issue its calendars with the scheduled start only two weeks away.

That same Federal Council meeting of August 16 ruled on several of the most contentious matters of the summer. It confirmed that Genoa would play in Serie C1 (and with a three-point deduction) and that debt-ridden Torino, who won promotion to Serie A, would remain in Serie B after their finances failed to pass COVISOC, the federation's financial regulatory board. In their place, as widely expected, Ascoli and Treviso were written into the Serie A calendar, the latter for the first time.

Controversial move...Philippe Mexes

While Italian football's other legal battles dragged on and on, Roma won their appeal against a FIFA ban that had effectively frozen their transfer market activities. This had been imposed after Roma were found guilty of poaching French defender Philippe Mexes from Auxerre a year ago. The ban was subsequently upheld by the Lausanne-based Court of Arbitration for Sport. However, on appeal, CAS overturned its original decision.

Bologna blues

Reggina, who finished 13th in Serie A last term, are also certain to continue in the division despite having owed £12million to the Inland Revenue since 2002. The decision to allow Reggina to stay up was not welcomed by Bologna owner Giuseppe Gazzoni, who had previously accused the League and federation of turning a blind eye to a wide variety of financial irregularities in the affairs of many clubs.

Given that Bologna lost a relegation play-off to Parma in June it might seem like a case of sour grapes, but Gazzoni probably had a point when he commented: "Reggina were enrolled in the dark [without any financial guarantees]. No one knew what their financial standing was. You simply cannot enrol a club with a debt like that." For the record, Reggina claimed their debt had been covered by a bank loan.

Gazzoni is not the only unhappy camper. Napoli were heading for the Council of State court, taking up arms against not only two Serie B sides – Pescara and Vicenza – but also the federation itself. This is in a desperate battle to win promotion to Serie B, at the expense of the clubs mentioned, which, Napoli claim, do not meet the COVISOC requirements.

One final thought comes from Gianni Petrucci, president of CONI, the ruling body of Italian sport. "I call on all clubs and teams to respect the rules, be they technical or of a sporting and ethical nature. These are essential for ensuring that climate of trust and serenity in competition that allows the championships to go ahead in a regular way."

He is joking, isn't he?

'Drop round to headquarters so that we can settle things'

The Genoa president's son, Matteo, calls Venezia official Giuseppe Pagliara

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Pavel NEDVED

Victory in Europe

The Czech midfielder says Juve's No 1 aim is to win the Champions League

What are your ambitions for the season ahead?
On a personal level I obviously want to play the best I can. I have to be realistic and realise I am not getting any younger, so I just want to make my last years the best years. Playing for a club like Juventus your ambition must be to always win the competitions you are in for. It is important that we retain the Serie A title for the fans but we all want the European Cup. It can be a competition of luck but it is the competition every top club in Europe wants.

Who will be the biggest threat to your Serie A crown?
Of course, Milan are a very strong team and they have become stronger over the summer. But we do not look at who might be a threat to us because it is in our hands. If we don't drop points we will win the League.

What was made in Italy of last season's Champions League Final?
It was an amazing game, the sort of thing you will probably never see again. Milan were worlds apart from Liverpool in the first half, but then Liverpool showed great team spirit, and I think in the end just about deserved the trophy.

What do you make of Steven Gerrard?
He is a fabulous player, absolutely world class. Every top European team in the world needs a player like him. You might have the players who score or make goals but unless you have somebody in the engine-room nothing can function properly. For me, he is now one of the top players in the world.

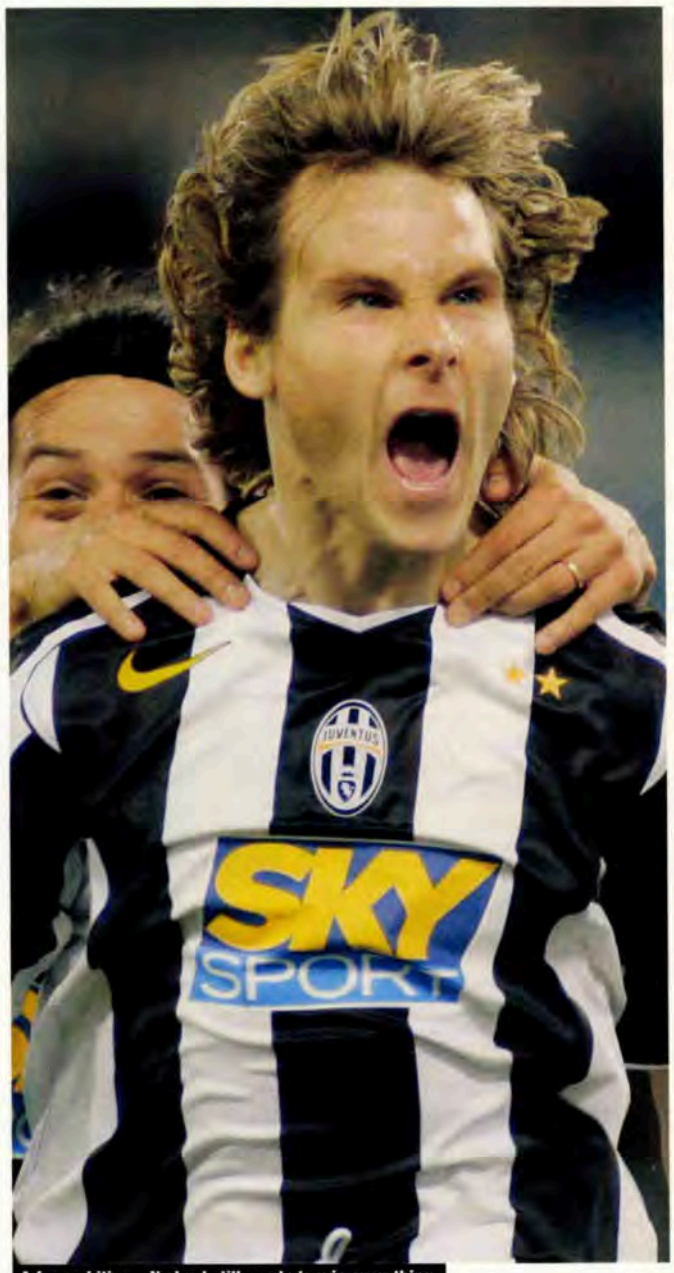
Is Juve's engine-room man now Patrick Vieira?
Yes, I would say he is. Edgar [Davids] was the man for years, he was a real bulldog. Patrick has set the standard for midfield players over the past five years. When he was playing with Zidane for France I thought it was the most unbelievable midfield combination the world has ever seen. I think now that we have Patrick we are in with a fantastic chance of winning the European Cup.

You must be glad David Trezeguet didn't go to Chelsea?
I am pleased he didn't go anywhere. I spoke to him and he never had any intention of leaving. We do not intend to sell our best players, and David is one of the most lethal strikers in the world.

Gianluigi Buffon cost Juventus £32million. How good is he?
He is the best goalkeeper in the world, it's as simple as that. You see the fantastic things he does in matches, but when you see his athletic ability in training it is mind-blowing.

Who are favourites to win the World Cup?
I would have to say Brazil. They seem to go into invincible mode at World Cups and they play without fear. They just attack, attack, attack, and it really is a joy to watch.

'I just want to make my last years the best years'



A for ambition...Nedved still wants to win everything

Ronaldo and Adriano up front being supported by Kaka and Ronaldinho – how could any defence cope with that?
Good question; it is amazing when you actually think about it. They are four of the best players in the world. You can't prepare to play against players like that because you have no idea what they are going to do. If you take a player like Ronaldinho, I don't think he even knows what he will do next, so the defenders have no chance.

But aren't they weak in defence?
I wouldn't go as far as to say they are weak, but defence certainly isn't their strongest point. To beat the Brazilians, I would say play like the Brazilians. Their mentality is they will score more than you.

What about England's chances?
They have a very special squad at the moment, the best they have had in a long time. They don't always seem to connect at major tournaments, but they certainly have the ability to do so. The central midfield pairing of Lampard and Gerrard is going to be very tough to break down.

Which players should we watch out for at the World Cup?
I think Ronaldinho and Henry are the obvious choices, because they are unique talents. But I think you should also watch out for Fernando Torres and Cristiano Ronaldo. They are two great young players with the world at their feet.

Interview by Ben Fairthorne

GILBERTO SILVA

'We'll miss Vieira'

Arsenal's Brazilian middle man on the challenge facing the Gunners

Can Arsenal close the gap on Chelsea in the Premier League this season?
It will not be easy for Chelsea this time. The rest of us need to improve, but they do as well and if we can put some pressure on them from the start, it will be interesting to see how they respond. That is what we have to work towards. If we play as well as we can, there is no reason why this Arsenal side cannot beat Chelsea, however much money they have got to spend.

How will Arsenal deal with the departure of Patrick Vieira to Juventus?
We will miss Patrick, there is no point in denying it. He was our best player and a great guy to have around. Patrick was one of my best friends in the team, so I was especially sad to see him go. He came with me to concerts sometimes and I hope we will be able to stay close friends, even though he has moved to Italy. I would like to thank him for everything he did in helping me settle at the club; I will never forget how much he helped me. I'm sure some other players in this squad would say the same.

Does Vieira's departure put extra responsibility on your shoulders?
From my perspective, there is no extra pressure to perform. I have already adapted my style to fit into the Arsenal way of thinking and I'm sure the manager will not be changing too much because we have lost one player, however important he was. What happens now that he has gone is the rest of us have to be ready to move up a level. The young players here proved how good they were last season and it is a challenge for all of us to bring success to Arsenal without Patrick.

You are not a typical Brazilian player. How did your style of play develop?
That's a fair comment. When you think of Brazilian football, it is all about flair and excitement, but my game is about stopping the opponents. Back home, they call me the "Invisible Wall" and I suppose that sums up the way I play. I allow the other players to do what they do best, and if people want me to play like Ronaldo, it is never going to happen. I'm more like Dunga. I don't have hold of the ball too often and when I do, it is not with me for long. My job is all about taking up the right position and doing something to help the team. It is not glamorous, but it is just as rewarding as scoring goals and getting the headlines.

Brazilian players have not always succeeded in England. How do you explain your success?
Arsenal play in a similar style to Brazil and that is why it has been easy for me to adapt to this team. The passing style and determination to keep the ball on the floor is not what some people in Brazil expect from an English team. What I found interesting in the Premiership was the level of commitment every player shows. In Brazil, we are not used to such a physical game and it took me some time to come to terms with this. After a couple of months, you understand there is no place to hide in English football and I feel comfortable here now.

Your compatriot, Kleberson, has left Manchester United. Were you surprised to see him go?
It was difficult for him at United and I am sorry it did not work out for him there. He is a good player, but it can be difficult for South American players to adapt to English football. I tried to call him on a few occasions to see how he was progressing, but he didn't return my calls. Maybe he doesn't like me or he is just upset because I play for one of United's biggest rivals!

Have you improved as a player in English football?
Certainly. My game has come on a lot. Working with Arsene Wenger is a good idea for any player; he tends to get the very best out of players.

Can Arsenal win the Champions League?
We have always had a big desire to achieve success in the Champions League and maybe our moment can come this season. When I look back on our defeat against Chelsea in the quarter-finals a couple of years ago, you realise how close we got to success.

How do you assess Brazil's preparations for the defence of their World Cup crown?
There will be massive pressure on us to win the World Cup next summer and the fact that the tournament is being played in Europe makes it very difficult. If you look at the records, not many South American teams have done well when the tournament has been staged in Europe, so we know what to expect.

Interview by Kevin Palmer

Well-settled...Gilberto Silva has established himself in English football

'Back home, people call me the "Invisible Wall"'

JOHN CAREW

Back in the big time

Keir Radnedge profiles the tall Norwegian striker, newly arrived at Champions League hopefuls Lyon

JOHN CAREW RETURNS to the Champions League with Lyon this season, eager to make his mark again in the competition that sets the standard by which players are judged in Europe. As he turns 26 the tall Norway centre-forward has enjoyed a relatively successful career so far but one that has not quite hit the heights he hoped it would when he first exploded on European football with a hatful of goals for his country at junior level.

Although he was prolific with his two Norwegian clubs – Valerenga and Rosenborg – and also last season at Besiktas, he struggled to score during spells at Valencia and Roma. In the Champions League, he was a runner-up with Valencia in 2001 and has twice scored five goals in a campaign, once with Rosenborg and once with Valencia. But he believes he can do much better.

Now, perhaps, he has found the right channel at Lyon, French champions for the past four seasons and hungry for success in Europe.

Carew has made an immediate impact following his £5million move from Besiktas this summer. He scored twice against Songnam in the Peace Cup in South Korea, and then hit a hat-trick in the French Supercup against Auxerre. Four days later, he scored the winner in Lyon's first League match, away to promoted Le Mans.

Veteran keeper Gregory Coupet says: "John brings us something extra, particularly in the tightest matches. We've never had someone with his power in the air and confidence in his own ability to score. He draws defenders towards him because of his physical strength but he can still get to the ball first, and he creates more space for the rest of the team. He is going to be an important weapon."

Carew, whose mother is Norwegian and his father from Gambia, began playing football aged 10 in his home town of Lorenskog. He progressed up the ladder with Valerenga, multi-champions Rosenborg then into the senior national team via the Under-21s.

His physique and technique were advantages in his youth but he worked hard on his acceleration and pace helped by some of Norway's top track and field specialists. Then the transfers up the international ladder extended his football education.

He enjoyed playing Champions League football with Valencia but just 20 League goals in three seasons was not what the Spanish club had hoped for. So it was not surprising that they let him go when Roma came in.

'This is an ambitious club, but then I'm ambitious too'

But that move did not work out either, with Carew finding goals even harder to come by in Italy. After just one season, when he scored six goals in 20 games, Carew was off again, to Turkey. But he soon recognised Besiktas' ambitions were beyond their capabilities and after another single-season stay, though with a creditable 13 goals in 24 games, he moved to France, his fifth country in six years.

Hardly had Carew signed on than he was being whisked away to South Korea, where his room-mate, ironically, was the transfer-seeking Michael Essien. Their career hopes may have clashed but the English language connection brought Carew quick access to the dressing-room patois.

"I'm going to work hard at learning French," said Carew, "not just the basic stuff but 'football French'. Everyone's been great. It's a big challenge because this is a very ambitious club. But then I'm ambitious too."

High hopes...Carew believes Lyon can help fulfil his Champions League dreams

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THE CONTENDERS

In the first of a two-part preview of the 2005-06 UEFA Champions League, World Soccer writers profile the 16 automatic entrants to the group stage. Next month: the 16 teams who came through the qualifiers

ARSENAL

Life after Vieira

The Gunners face a tough challenge in their final season at Highbury

ARSENE WENGER HAS always been a canny operator in the transfer market, selling the likes of Nicolas Anelka, Emmanuel Petit and Marc Overmars for huge profits. To that list can now be added the name of Patrick Vieira, captain and the dominant, driving figure in Arsenal's midfield for the past nine seasons, sold to Juventus for £14million.

Yet the ease with which Arsenal allowed Juventus to sign Vieira – in contrast to the resistance put up to Real Madrid in previous years – suggests the Gunners were not devastated to see him depart.

"I cannot replace Patrick Vieira," Wenger said. "Everyone expects me to buy another Patrick Vieira, but if another Patrick Vieira existed, Juventus would not have come to Arsenal to buy the player. We will have to find a different system to play and not expect that we will find another Patrick Vieira.

"I feel that the team has to regroup. We have lost a giant and a magnificent player. The negative influence is that the team feels less strong psychologically but on the other hand it can wake everybody up a little bit."

Even with Vieira in the ranks last season, Arsenal struggled in Europe. Injuries to Sol Campbell and Gilberto Silva exposed the paucity of the squad, while the team's attacking style, which earned them the "invincibles" tag for their performances in the Premier League, failed to translate to the Champions League.

The sale of Vieira overshadowed other important events at Arsenal over the summer, as the club prepared for their final season at Highbury. These included Ashley Cole's change of heart over a new contract and the departure of Edu to Valencia.

Wenger insists Arsenal have the capacity to surprise in the coming campaign. But there are doubts about whether youngsters such as Mathieu Flamini, Arturo Lupoli and Quincy Owusu-Abeyie – who will get more chances this season – are up to the challenge.

Gavin Hamilton

Testing time...Mathieu Flamini should get the chance to show what he's made of

TACTICS

ARSENE WENGER has always preferred 4-4-1-1, with slick passing and a ferocious pace, though this has not always suited European games. Jens Lehmann is first-choice keeper, despite lapses in judgement, particularly with high balls. In defence, Sol Campbell's injury troubles may mean the young partnership of Kolo Toure and Philippe Senderos continues. Ashley Cole and Lauren are the full-backs, with Gael Clichy a capable deputy for Cole.

In central midfield, Gilberto Silva is likely to be partnered by Mathieu Flamini or Cesc Fabregas, with any two from Robert Pires, Alexander Hleb, Jose Antonio Reyes and Freddie Ljungberg on the flanks. Any of these four may also be called into service as a secondary striker behind Thierry Henry.

Dennis Bergkamp continues to defy the ageing process to play in the space behind Henry, but his fear of flying means away appearances will be limited to those games he can reach by car or train. Robin Van Persie is developing nicely as the long-term replacement for Bergkamp, but there is a distinct lack of alternatives to Henry. Youngsters Arturo Lupoli and Quincy Owusu-Abeyie may get their chance this season.

THE STADIUM

Highbury (capacity 38,500)...for one more season only, before Arsenal decamp to the new 60,000-seat arena at Ashburton Grove half a mile away. Highbury the Library has its critics but it remains the quintessential English football ground.

THE MANAGER

Arsene Wenger... the 55-year-old Frenchman is less than a year away from becoming Arsenal's longest-serving post-war manager. Dubbed The Professor for his cerebral approach.

KEY MAN

Gilberto Silva...Arsenal paid a heavy price for the injuries to their Brazilian midfielder last season. In the absence of Patrick Vieira, his contribution will be even more vital this season.

MAN TO WATCH

Alexander Hleb (left) ...the Belorussian's runs and dribbles should fit in well with Arsenal's fast-paced game.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE

How they qualified: as League runners-up.
Five-year record:
00-01 – quarter-finals (lost to Valencia on away goals after 2-2 agg draw)
01-02 – 2nd group stage (3rd behind Bayer Leverkusen and Deportivo La Coruna)
02-03 – 2nd group stage (3rd behind Valencia and Ajax)
03-04 – quarter-finals (lost to Chelsea 3-2 on agg)
04-05 – 2nd round (lost to Bayern 3-2 on agg).

BARCELONA

Gathering strength

Barca's squad now has impressive depth as their injury troubles ease

Brazilian blend...Edmilson is back after injury to team up with Ronaldinho

THIERRY HENRY. Julio Baptista. Patrick Vieira. Even Michael Owen. All were mentioned, none arrived. None ever seemed close, except Baptista – and he has ended up at bitter rivals Real Madrid.

This summer, Barcelona have concentrated on building a squad, not a team. Superstar signings have been conspicuous by their absence, and Barca's first-choice starting XI may be almost entirely unchanged from last season, when they won their first League title in six years.

Indeed, the "only" money spent in the summer has been on huge new contracts for the existing stars – to keep Ronaldinho, Samuel Eto'o, Deco and Xavi at Camp Nou for life (captain Carles Puyol is next in line).

Barca have brought in only Santi Ezquerro from Athletic Bilbao, an infuriatingly erratic but extremely talented forward, and Mark Van Bommel, the heart of PSV's surprise surge to last season's Champions League semi-finals.

Van Bommel has impressed, not least with his versatility and efforts to learn Spanish – the Dutchman locked himself away in a Spanish monastery for a week to immerse himself in the new language.

Yet, while there have been only two new signings, there is a new look and some much-needed depth about Barcelona because of the return from injury of long-term casualties Edmilson, Gabri, Thiago Motta and Henrik Larsson.

At the same time, playmaker Andres Iniesta is a year more experienced, while people are sitting up and taking notice of Argentinian teenager Lionel Messi after he starred at the World Youth Cup.

One cloud lingers over the club: the acrimonious departure of vice-president Sandro Rosell.

That apart, Barca's strength in depth means they could well be able to mount a challenge in Europe as well as La Liga. Defeat against Chelsea in last season's Champions League still stings; Barca are looking for revenge.

Sid Lowe

TACTICS

FRANK RIJKAARD WILL stick to his favoured 4-3-3 formation, based on intelligent use of the ball and technical ability as well as a willingness to improvise.

Full-backs Belletti and Giovanni Van Bronckhorst will push on to provide width and depth while Carles Puyol will again anchor the defence in front of Victor Valdes, joined either by Edmilson or Rafael Marquez, with Oleguer in reserve.

The man who does not partner Puyol – probably Marquez – will underpin a three-man midfield also featuring the slick distribution of Xavi and the all-round game of Deco. The latter provides tackling, aggression and goals plus a wonderful eye for the killer pass. Of the other midfield contenders, Mark Van Bommel provides greater attacking thrust, Andres Iniesta clever probing and Thiago Motta bite.

Samuel Eto'o will again lead the attack, with Ronaldinho, nominally, on the left and Ludovic Giuly on the right. For all Eto'o's goals last term, Barca lacked penalty area presence and missed too many chances. Maxi Lopez gives bulk but does not truly convince but Henrik Larsson could have an important role to play.

THE STADIUM

Camp Nou (capacity 98,600)...a monster bowl, reaching into the Catalan sky, and one of the great stadiums. The complex helps Barca feel like more than a club, since it also features the mini stadium, museum, basketball arena and training ground. When things aren't going well, though, the atmosphere can be hugely disappointing.

THE COACH

Frank Rijkaard... cool, calm and as nice a guy as you could wish to meet, the Dutchman encourages expression and freedom on the pitch and never, ever says anything out of turn off it. Maintains a quiet authority, though.

KEY MAN

Deco...he makes Barcelona tick – forget Ronaldinho, Samuel Eto'o and Carles Puyol. Bought as a creative midfielder, but tackles more than any other Barca player, while everything the team do comes through him.

MAN TO WATCH

Ronaldinho...for sheer fun, comic enjoyment and utter brilliance there's still no one quite like the Brazilian – a genius, capable of doing the most amazing things with the ball.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE

How they qualified: as League champions.
Five-year record:
00-01 – 1st group stage (3rd behind Milan and Leeds)
01-02 – semi-finals (lost to Real Madrid 3-1 on agg)
02-03 – quarter-finals (lost to Juventus 3-2 on agg)
03-04 – did not qualify
04-05 – 2nd round (lost to Chelsea 5-4 on agg).

BAYERN MUNICH

Continental drift

The German champions have fallen behind Europe's biggest hitters

BAYERN COACH Felix Magath, not to mention president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge and general manager Uli Hoeness, has been insisting that retaining the Bundesliga title rather than winning a European trophy is the club's top priority for the season. That makes perfect sense. Although the Bavarians are far and away the market leaders on the domestic front, in the Champions League they do not inhabit the same comfort zone.

Yes, they have class acts, notably Michael Ballack in midfield, central defender Lucio and Dutch goal machine Roy Makaay. But with no Russian sugar daddy to call on and no inclination to play fast and loose with their finances, Bayern are at a disadvantage compared to the continent's hardest-hitters. Because of this, they may have to make do with a quarter-final spot at best.

There was no manic activity for Bayern in the transfer market this summer. The only money spent was the £5.5million for Werder Bremen's French central defender Valerien Ismael, while two other players were brought in at zero cost. These were Iranian attacking midfielder Ali Karimi, the current Asian Footballer of the Year, on a free transfer from Al Ahli in Dubai; and German international left-back Philipp Lahm, returned to HQ after two years of stunning progress on loan at Stuttgart. Lahm, however, will not be available straight away. He tore knee ligaments in spring and will be back in November at the earliest.

The departures of defenders Thomas Linke (Salzburg) and Sammy Kuffour (Roma), and strikers Vahid Hashemian (Hannover) and Alex Zickler (Salzburg) left no one shocked. All four had been declared surplus to requirements early in 2005 and jumped before they were pushed. Much less predictable was the sight of German midfield all-rounder Torsten Frings packing his bags for Werder Bremen less than a year after arriving in Munich. Frings and Magath did not see eye to eye, it seems.

Crucially for Bayern, speculation that Ballack was heading for Manchester United or Real Madrid proved unfounded, though with his contract running out in June 2006 and no new deal agreed, this may be his last season in Bavaria. Will he go out with a bang?

Nick Bidwell

More than a handful...Bayern will be relying on Roy Makaay's eye for goal

TACTICS

FELIX MAGATH'S PREFERRED formation is a very flexible 4-4-2. At its heart is a midfield diamond, with either Martin Demichelis or Owen Hargreaves at the base, charged with ball-winning duties and supplying cover when centre-back Lucio goes on his forward runs. In theory, the engine-room features two wide midfielders (probably Bastian Schweinsteiger or Ze Roberto on the left and Sebastian Deisler or Ali Karimi on the right), plus Michael Ballack at the apex. But nothing is written in stone. The wide men are always moving inside, and all three creative midfielders are for ever changing position.

Roy Makaay is bound to start in attack, paired with either Claudio Pizarro or Roque Santa Cruz. Magath insists the forwards are fed on a diet of good crosses, and the full-backs are expected to provide a large proportion of them. Willy Sagnol looks a certain starter at right-back, but with Philipp Lahm in absentia, the left-back berth could go to veteran Bixente Lizarazu, Hasan Salihamidzic or even Hargreaves.

Lucio will be partnered in central defence by new boy Valerien Ismael, whose strength in the air should rectify one of Bayern's weaknesses.

THE STADIUM

Allianz Arena (capacity 66,000)...Bayern's new ground is a marvel of design, but more importantly it's a real football stadium, with considerably more atmosphere and intimacy than the Olympiastadion.

THE COACH

Felix Magath...the critics who thought his uncompromising style of labour relations would not sit well with Bayern's millionaire players were wrong. He was brought in last summer to provide discipline, more pro-active play and better fitness, and has scored heavily on all three counts.

KEY MAN

Michael Ballack...in the past, Magath and predecessor Ottmar Hitzfeld made the error of playing Ballack too deep in midfield, limiting his potential to score. That should no longer be the case, with the Germany captain in close proximity to the front two.

MAN TO WATCH

Ali Karimi...two other Iranians – Ali Daei and Vahid Hashemian – failed to make the grade at Bayern. It may be third time lucky for Karimi, a virtuoso midfielder who can play wide or centrally.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE

How they qualified: as League champions.
Five-year record:
00-01 – winners (beat Valencia 5-4 on pens after 1-1 draw)
01-02 – quarter-finals (lost to Real Madrid 3-2 on agg)
02-03 – 1st group stage (4th behind Milan, Deportivo La Coruna and Lens)
03-04 – 2nd round (lost to Real Madrid 2-1 on agg)
04-05 – quarter-finals (lost to Chelsea 6-5 on agg).

BENFICA

Knockout blow

The squad lacks the strength and experience to get past the group stage

Rarity...Nuno Gomes is one of the few players with Champions League experience

AFTER A FIVE-YEAR hiatus, two-time European Cup winners Benfica are back in the Champions League group phase. The club's return has everyone buzzing with excitement at the Stadium of Light, but taking into account the squad's limited size and lack of experience in Europe, only the purest of optimists believe they can reach the last 16.

Nuno Gomes, Simao Sabrosa and Geovanni are the only Benfica players to have kicked a Champions League ball, so there is a lot of work ahead for coach Ronald Koeman, twice a European Cup winner himself, in order to get his other players up to speed.

Long gone are the days when Eusebio's magic hypnotised the continent and made Benfica a force at home and abroad. The Eagles' 11-year League title drought, which finally ended last season, tells a story of disappointment and instability, with several chairmen and coaches having walked the plank, paying the price for the team's failure to live up to expectations.

Koeman has said repeatedly that Benfica's priority this season is to retain the domestic championship, but knows that a successful run in the Champions League would bring in some much-needed cash.

The Dutch coach was under financial constraints this summer and made few signings. However, the major players he did buy look likely to take first-team places – Anderson (bought from Corinthians), Leo (Santos) and Andrei Karyaka (Kryliya Sovetov). Midfield anchorman Beto, signed from Beira Mar, could also play an important part in Koeman's rotation scheme. Meanwhile, Nelson, a new signing from Boavista, should get the nod at right-back following the departure of contract rebel Miguel to Valencia.

Pedro Pinto

TACTICS

RONALD KOEMAN HAS indicated that he will deploy a 4-2-3-1 formation, the same tactical scheme as used by Giovanni Trapattoni last season, though Koeman's version has a greater need for speed in attacking play. Midfield duo Petit and Manuel Fernandes will have the responsibility of controlling the side's tempo with constant short passes to the wings, where Simao Sabrosa, Andrei Karyaka or Geovanni will operate.

Nuno Gomes, the side's loan striker, will be under a lot of pressure to improve on his goal record of last season – just seven in 23 League games. Unless his ratio does get better, Benfica stand little chance of progressing in Europe.

The side's main strength is at the back, where Luisao and Anderson form a solid partnership. The Brazilian duo complement each other perfectly, with the former known for his prowess in the air, and the latter able to deliver quality passes upfield.

● THE STADIUM
Estadio da Luz (capacity 65,000)...not as intimidating as the old stadium with the same name, which had nearly double the capacity, but this state-of-the-art complex brings a lot of prestige to the club.

● THE COACH

Ronald Koeman... unlike Giovanni Trapattoni, his predecessor, the 42-year-old former Ajax boss is known for his love of attacking football and is trying to make the squad adapt to a new mentality and rhythm of play.

● KEY MAN
Simao Sabrosa...the team captain has been Benfica's top goalscorer for the past three seasons and is the heart and soul of the team. Plays primarily on the left wing, where his mazy runs wreak havoc among defences. However, Koeman has also deployed him in a central attacking role.

● MAN TO WATCH
Manuel Fernandes...the young midfielder, crucial during Benfica's march to the title last season, has shown signs of developing into a star player. A product of the Eagles' youth system, the 19-year-old has plenty of drive and determination, which compensate for his lack of experience in top-flight football.

● CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE
How they qualified: as League champions.
Five-year record:
00-01 – did not qualify
01-02 – did not qualify
02-03 – did not qualify
03-04 – 3rd qualifying round (lost to Lazio 4-1 on agg)
04-05 – 3rd qualifying round (lost to Anderlecht 3-1 on agg).

CHELSEA

Benchtime blues?

The favourites face a challenge to keep their all-star squad happy

WHAT IS THERE for the neutral observer to admire about Chelsea? Their first League title success for 50 years was funded by a Russian billionaire whose wealth was gained by dubious means and whose motivation for becoming involved in Chelsea remains a mystery. Last season they played functional football that rarely excited, while manager Jose Mourinho clashed with authority at every opportunity.

This season, the arrogance of Mourinho has spread to chief executive Peter Kenyon, who claimed the winners of this season's Premier League "will come from a small bunch of one".

Dissent in the ranks...Ricardo Carvalho was not happy about being dropped

The one question mark hanging over Chelsea is whether, in a World Cup year, Mourinho will be able to keep all his players happy. Chelsea's B team is arguably as good as many other first teams in the Champions League, but already defender Ricardo Carvalho has publicly expressed disappointment at being dropped.

Nevertheless, Chelsea start out as favourites to win the European crown. For the past two seasons, they have fallen at the semi-final stage. In 2004, the mystifying tactics of then manager Claudio Ranieri against Monaco threw away a golden opportunity to reach the Final. Last season, luck was against them when Liverpool triumphed by a single, highly questionable goal.

Luck is bound to play a big part again in the knockout stages this time round. For all the strength of Mourinho's squad – bolstered further by the £26million acquisition of Lyon midfielder Michael Essien – Chelsea know that the Champions League has been no respecter of reputations in recent years.

Roman Abramovich will be hoping that the more money he lavishes on Chelsea from his seemingly limitless fortune, the luckier they get. Everybody else will be hoping otherwise.

Gavin Hamilton

TACTICS

JOSE MOURINHO'S usual 4-1-3-2 formation can switch to a 4-3-3 or 4-5-1 when needed. In defence, captain John Terry and William Gallas are the first-choices, with Ricardo Carvalho relegated to the bench, along with the giant Robert Huth. New signing Asier Del Horno will compete with Wayne Bridge, newly recovered from injury, for the left-back slot, while Paulo Ferreira is likely to be preferred to Glen Johnson at right-back.

In midfield, Claude Makelele is the anchor, allowing Frank Lampard to roam forward. Joe Cole, Tiago and Geremi are all supporting options; Michael Essien can fill a number of roles, but will most likely be used in tandem with Lampard.

In attack, Mourinho must decide between Hernan Crespo and the more physical Didier Drogba at centre-forward, with a wide man – Arjen Robben or Damien Duff – playing off the main striker.

Alternatively, Eidur Gudjohnsen can play as a second striker. Shaun Wright-Phillips gives new options on the right flank, while Duff and Robben can also play in wide midfield roles in a more attacking formation.

● THE STADIUM

Stamford Bridge (capacity 42,449)...Roman Abramovich's arrival has signalled the end of the Chelsea Village project, in which previous chairman Ken Bates tried to turn the football ground into a hotel and property complex with football pitch attached.

● THE MANAGER

Jose Mourinho...the self-styled "Special One" served his apprenticeship under Bobby Robson and Louis Van Gaal at Barcelona, took Porto to phenomenal success, and will join the ranks of the truly great coaches if he repeats that success with Chelsea.

● KEY MAN

Frank Lampard...once dubbed the poor man's David Platt but he has blossomed into one of Europe's best all-round midfielders. A complete professional and outstanding role model.

● MAN TO WATCH

Shaun Wright-Phillips...brings electric pace to Chelsea, but how will Mourinho fit his £21m summer signing into a formation where wide men Damien Duff and Arjen Robben have been key components?

● CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE

How they qualified: as League champions.

Five-year record:

00-01 – did not qualify
01-02 – did not qualify
02-03 – did not qualify
03-04 – semi-finals (lost to Monaco 5-3 on agg)
04-05 – semi-finals (lost to Liverpool 1-0 on agg).

FENERBAHCE

Trouble in store

The rumoured dissent in the ranks could stymie European progress

Name game...new arrival Stephen Appiah

THE TURKISH LEAGUE title winners for the past two seasons have, on paper, assembled their strongest squad for years. But after two lacklustre draws at the start of the domestic campaign, during which the club's top foreign players Nicolas Anelka, Alex de Souza, new signing Stephen Appiah, Marcio Nobre and Marco Aurelio failed to shine, coach Christoph Daum admitted that there was a "knot that needed to be untied" before the team could perform to standard. "I need to have a chat with my team...I won't discuss things in public...I know what I need to do," was all the German would add.

This gave rise to speculation that Daum had clashed with his players, as he reportedly did last season. Was there, for instance, a row brewing with Anelka, who was surprisingly taken off just before half-time of the second League game, against Diyarbakirspor? The Frenchman was returning after a long injury lay-off and had been handed his preferred central striking role. But Daum's explanation for his removal – that he thought Anelka had been injured – raised more questions than it answered.

Alex de Souza did manage to get on the scoreboard in the 2-2 draw, but he spent most of the game walking around listlessly and looking nothing like the "team leader" he promised he would be this season. Nobody else, apart from the frantic attacking midfielder Tuncay Sanli, seemed to be making much effort either. Indeed, first-choice goalkeeper Rustu Recber was not even taking part as his pre-season preparation had been deemed unsatisfactory.

None of this augurs well for the club's Champions League campaign. Fenerbahce have yet to have a successful run in Europe, and surely need more team commitment to change that fact. There is no doubt that if the team could fulfil their potential they could go some way in Europe. But, on present form, it will be a surprise if this season is very much different from the disappointing European outings of the past.

Suna Erdem

TACTICS

FENERBAHCE'S WEAK POINT last season was their defence. After wavering between using a back line of three and four, Christoph Daum has finally settled on the latter, and plans to use new signing Stephen Appiah as a shield just in front of the defence. In midfield, Marco Aurelio, freed from defensive duties by Appiah, will be able to play a more forward-looking role and work with Alex de Souza, further up the field, who will in turn link up with Nicolas Anelka (or Marcio Nobre) as the lone attacker. Tuncay Sanli and Serkan Balci will provide impetus from the wings.

Many of Fenerbahce's midfielders are blessed with the qualities of a striker, often creating the impression that the team are playing 4-2-4. Indeed, Tuncay's attacking runs often bring him into a centre-forward position. If Daum's tactics work, Fener will boldly take the game to the opposition and will have many options to score; if they fail, they will leave gaping holes in central midfield and on the wings, making the team highly vulnerable to counter-attacks.

THE STADIUM
Sukru Saracoglu (capacity 43,200)... towering high over the road that leads from the Bosphorus bridge to Istanbul's Asian side, the stadium is an intimidating monument to Turkey's most popular club. Its remoteness from the well-trodden paths of European Istanbul and its fanatically loud supporters make the Sukru Saracoglu one of the club's big assets in European competition.

THE COACH

Christoph Daum... the German has led Fener to the League title for the past two seasons, but nearly quit late last term saying he could no longer stand what he called a media campaign against him, following disputes with the players and the board.

KEY MAN
Alex de Souza...the young Brazilian attacking midfielder is normally the team's driving force and an expert at set-pieces.

MAN TO WATCH
Nicolas Anelka... Daum appears determined to use the Frenchman as the spearhead of his team, despite rumours he is restless. If Fener can make him happy, he could be a devastating weapon. If not, they could be in disarray.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE
How they qualified: as League champions.
Five-year record:
00-01 – did not qualify
01-02 – 1st group stage (4th behind Barcelona, Bayer Leverkusen and Lyon)
02-03 – 3rd qualifying round (lost to Feyenoord 3-0 on agg)
03-04 – did not qualify
04-05 – group stage (3rd behind Lyon and Manchester United).

JUVENTUS

Extra efficiency

Vieira's signing has added strength to midfield

SUCCESS IS WRITTEN into the Juventus DNA, or so said Fabio Capello at the end of last season. And as the champagne bottles popped in celebration of a 28th Italian title win last May, the Juve coach warned that he and his staff were already working on plans for further success in 2005-06.

Everybody saw just how those plans went when the Old Lady signed Arsenal's 29-year-old French midfielder Patrick Vieira for £14million in July. While there are those who feel that Arsenal may have got the better of that deal, Capello is confident that he has added a vitally important cog to the Juventus machine. "At the end of last season, we asked ourselves what section of the team needed strengthening," he said. "We all agreed our biggest problem was the midfield and we looked at teams all over the world, coming to the conclusion that Vieira was the best. Now, we've been able to get him."

Much will obviously depend on how Vieira settles back into Italian football after a nine-year absence (he joined Arsenal from Milan in 1996. Much will also depend on his central midfield relationship with Brazilian Emerson, one of Juve's key figures last season. Yet both men are such good players that, as of now, Juventus look stronger than last season. Apart from Vieira, the most interesting newcomer could be ex-Fiorentina left-back Giorgio Chiellini, 21.

Under Capello last season, the team were typically effective and efficient, if rarely stunningly attractive. Expect more of the same this season and expect, too, to find them particularly motivated in the Champions League.

French striker David Trezeguet gave an indication of the mood in the camp when saying: "I've been at Juventus for five seasons and won three League titles, but my big regret is that Champions League Final defeat [by Milan in 2003]. The Champions League is something that really matters to us all; winning the League is simply no longer enough."

Paddy Agnew

Mean machine...coach Capello believes Vieira will sort out midfield deficiencies

TACTICS

FABIO CAPELLO'S basic module is a classic 4-4-2, based on the solid spine of goalkeeper Gigi Buffon, central defenders Lilian Thuram and Fabio Cannavaro and midfielders Emerson and Patrick Vieira. This format allows for the full-backs, Jonathan Zebina (or Giorgio Chiellini) and Gianluca Zambrotta, to move forward in support of attacking midfielders Mauro Camoranesi, on the right, and Pavel Nedved, on the left.

Without the spark of Nedved's invention for much of last season, because of injury, Juventus often looked dull and predictable – for example, in the second leg of their quarter-final tie with Liverpool. If Nedved can return to something like his best form, then he will resolve many of Juve's problems.

With Marcelo Zalayeta, Alessandro Del Piero and Adrian Mutu challenging the places of first-choice strikers Zlatan Ibrahimovic and David Trezeguet, Capello does have alternatives in attack. This strength in depth up front also allows the coach to go to a 4-3-3 format if and when necessary.

THE STADIUM
Delle Alpi (capacity 60,000)...its poor visibility and cavernous atmosphere mean it has never been popular with Juve fans. Planned reconstruction work is not due to start until next summer so, for this year at least, it will be the same old Stadio Delle Alpi.

THE COACH

Fabio Capello... determined and with a reputation for enforcing discipline, he is arguably the best coach in Italy. The 59-year-old's astute leadership was a major factor in Juve's title win last season, Capello's first at the Turin club.

KEY MAN
Emerson...tough-tackling and hard-working, he is hardly your typical Brazilian midfielder. Emerson's contribution to the team is huge, both in terms of defensive workrate and offensive quality.

MAN TO WATCH
Adrian Mutu...the Romanian striker, back from the wilderness of suspension, has much to prove. He certainly has the ability to make a major impact at Juve, though he will start the season well down the strikers' pecking order.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE
How they qualified: as League champions.
Five-year record:
00-01 – 1st group stage (4th behind Deportivo La Coruna, Panathinaikos and Hamburg)
01-02 – 2nd group stage (4th behind Bayer Leverkusen, Deportivo La Coruna and Arsenal)
02-03 – runners-up (lost to Milan 3-2 on penalties after 0-0 draw)
03-04 – 2nd round (lost to Deportivo La Coruna 2-0 on agg)
04-05 – quarter-finals (lost to Liverpool 2-1 on agg).

LILLE

Fashion parade

The unheralded club will relish the chance to appear on the big stage

Euro experience...Lille (in red) had a decent run in last season's UEFA Cup

LILLE RANK AMONG the "establishment" clubs of French football, but their strengths are consistently underestimated.

Even those who recognise the great contribution the club made to the regeneration of the French game after the Second World War – when they won two League titles and five Cups in nine years – prefer to focus on the more media-savvy outfits of Lyon, PSG, Marseille and Bordeaux. The impression of unfashionableness was underlined when it took Canal Plus three weeks to schedule Lille into this season's live TV coverage, long after the "big" clubs' programme had been drawn up.

No wonder president Michel Sedoux and coach Claude Puel grumble so much about a lack of support from media, politicians and businessmen. But success on one front breeds success on another. They believe the club's presence in the Champions League – even for only the group stage – will provide a platform for revival, much as it did for champions Lyon.

Working to a £14million budget does not offer much room for manoeuvre. Lille made few major signings during the summer but did, at least, hang on to most of the backbone of the team who finished second to Lyon last term.

"If I didn't think we could break through I wouldn't still be here," says Puel, who persuaded 10 of his most promising young players to sign contract extensions. "Last season we were a small club achieving excellent results. Now it's time to move forward."

European experience is not lacking. Last term Lille progressed from InterToto Cup to UEFA Cup, topping their group in the latter then beating Basle in the first knockout round before falling to Auxerre. If Lille end up in the latter stages of the UEFA Cup again this season, by finishing third in their Champions League group, they will not be too downhearted. Considering the firepower ranged against them, a third-place finish would be an achievement in itself.

Keir Radnedge

TACTICS

CLAUDE PUEL has stuck with Lille, despite their stadium problems, because he believes in the club's potential to pull in more support from both the local population and commercial enterprises. Meanwhile, he has no option but to work with a young squad, half of them graduates from the club's youth system.

Veteran Senegalese keeper Tony Sylva has Champions League experience from his spells with Monaco. This may prove invaluable since the back four, which includes Arsenal and Portsmouth cast-off Stathis Tavlaridis and widely-travelled Brazilian Rafael Schmitz, risks being found wanting in European competition.

Jean Makoun and Stephane Dumont will have their work cut out holding midfield together – which explains why Puel will probably use a five-man screen, at least in the Champions League. For goals, Lille will largely rely on Matt Moussilou, who offers pace on the break. He will be supported by Daniel Gygax and Hicham Aboucherouane, newly arrived from Zurich and Raja Casablanca respectively.

THE STADIUM

All over the place...a regional court halted redevelopment of Lille's Stade Grimonprez-Joris so the club have been forced to play domestic matches in the Metropole at nearby Villeneuve-d'Ascq and will play Champions League games at Lens' Stade Bollaert (capacity 41,649) or even in the Stade de France (78,500). Coach Claude Puel likes the latter option because he feels the publicity would impose pressure on a reluctant local authority to get behind the club at long last.

THE COACH

Claude Puel...made his name as a midfielder with Monaco between 1979 and 1996, winning two League titles and one Cup under Arsene Wenger. Stepped up as Monaco boss in 1999, winning the League in 2000, but was sacked a year later. Took over Lille in 2002 and led them to runners-up spot last season.

KEY MAN

Jean Makoun... Cameroonian who signed for Lille aged 18 in the autumn of 2001 from Tonnerre Yaounde. Started out as a winger but now applies his pace and footballing intelligence deep in the heart of midfield.

MAN TO WATCH

Matt Moussilou... Lille youth product who replaced injured striker Vladimir Manchev midway through last term and top-scored with 12 goals.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE

How they qualified: as League runners-up.
Five-year record:
00-01 – did not qualify
01-02 – 1st group stage (3rd behind Deportivo La Coruna and Manchester United)
02-03 – did not qualify
03-04 – did not qualify
04-05 – did not qualify.

LYON

Out to do the business

The team are strong despite the disruption of the Essien saga

LYON'S SUMMER and the first weeks of their domestic campaign were dominated by the saga of Ghanaian midfielder Michael Essien. The uncertainty about whether he was to join Chelsea – which he finally did – must surely have disrupted coach Gerard Houllier's preparations for Lyon's Champions League campaign, not least because the former Liverpool boss refused to select his star man while the tug-of-war continued.

But if nothing else, the Essien affair at least gives credence to the stated intention of club president Jean-Michel Aulas to turn Lyon, French champions for the past four seasons, into one of Europe's powerhouse clubs, starting with this season's Champions League campaign. "They thought we were just country bumpkins with our berets and a baguette in the pocket," said Aulas of Chelsea's manner of dealing with his club. "That's not the way it works at Lyon."

Indeed. While no one can claim that the French League is Europe's strongest, Lyon's total dominance of it, together with their strong showing in Europe last season when they unluckily went out on penalties to PSV Eindhoven in the quarter-finals, shows that they're an outfit that mean business.

There's no doubt Lyon would be stronger with Essien in the ranks, but there's enough class in the squad to suggest Lyon will make their mark on the Champions League even without him. They have a seasoned keeper in Gregory Coupet and a defence that's well-drilled and solid, despite the three-month absence through injury of highly-rated Eric Abidal.

But it's in midfield and up front that Lyon have Champions League class. Benoit Pedretti, newly signed from Marseille, has added extra guile to central midfield, where he plays alongside the more than solid Mahamadou Diarra and Florent Malouda. Meanwhile, the arrival of John Carew from Besiktas to partner Sylvain Wiltord in attack means that goals shouldn't be hard to come by.

Further changes were afoot at Lyon, with Brazilian midfielder Juninho stalling over a contract extension and Aulas having stated his desire to buy another top-class striker. But the French champions certainly look strong enough to make a decent fist of it against any of Europe's giants.

Howard Johnson

Early impact...John Carew is mobbed after scoring on his French League debut

TACTICS

IT WILL BE interesting to see whether Gerard Houllier will be brave enough to take on Europe's best with the attacking 4-4-2 system he uses in Ligue 1. There, midfielders Florent Malouda and Sidney Govou are both given the freedom to attack, offering serious options when they go up in support of forwards Sylvain Wiltord and the giant John Carew. The suspicion, though, is that the coach will opt for a more defence-minded formation, particularly away from home, to avoid his back line becoming too exposed. In this case, Wiltord may be sacrificed, leaving Carew as the lone striker, since he has the strength and power to hold the ball up. The onus will then be on either Benoit Pedretti or Juninho to make sure Carew gets enough service to cause problems.

Lyon's ability to score goals has already been proven in Europe (29 in 10 games last season) and the addition of Carew should make them even more of a threat. They may lack a little overall strength in depth and a spate of injuries could hit them hard, but the French champions now have enough talent and European savoir faire to do well.

● THE STADIUM

Gerland (capacity 41,044)...now ranks alongside PSG's Parc des Princes and Marseille's Velodrome as one of the homes of French football. It's fair to say that other clubs may claim more passionate fans, but Gerland is a very impressive stadium as well as something of a fortress for Lyon.

● THE COACH

Gerard Houllier... has it all to prove after replacing the hugely successful Paul Le Guen. He's made a solid start in the domestic League, but it will be in Europe where he will ultimately be judged.

● KEY MAN

Claudio Cacapa... Lyon have plenty of firepower, but to make real progress depends just as much on whether the team's powerful Brazilian skipper can marshal his defence against Europe's best.

● MAN TO WATCH

Benoit Pedretti...eyes were raised – and no wonder – when Marseille put up little resistance to Lyon's advances for their dynamic midfielder this summer.

● CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE

How they qualified: as League champions.
Five-year record:
00-01 – 2nd group stage (3rd behind Bayern Munich and Arsenal)
01-02 – 1st group stage (3rd behind Barcelona and Bayer Leverkusen)
02-03 – 1st group stage (3rd behind Inter and Ajax)
03-04 – quarter-finals (lost to Porto 4-2 on agg)
04-05 – quarter-finals (lost to PSV 4-2 on pens after 2-2 agg draw).

MILAN

Forget that Final!

Ancelotti's men must quickly erase the memory of their Istanbul fiasco

Pointing the way...£16m Alberto Gilardino celebrates a pre-season goal

IT IS TEMPTING to imagine that at this summer's pre-season training camp, Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti spent more time working on his players' psyche than on their physical fitness. What is sure is that Milan badly need to get the new season off to a winning start to wipe out the memories of that absurdly incompetent Champions League Final loss to Liverpool.

By way of sending out positive messages, the club's management has pulled off arguably the single biggest market move of the Italian summer, namely the £16million purchase of striker Alberto Gilardino from Parma. On his arrival at Milan, Gilardino explained he had opted for them because they are "the strongest club in Europe". Until that dramatic debacle in Istanbul, many of us thought exactly the same.

Milan have further strengthened their squad this summer by buying Inter striker Christian Vieri, Czech defender Marek Jankulovski (Udinese) and Swiss midfielder Johann Vogel (PSV Eindhoven).

But despite these important signings, it was not surprising that, at press time, Milan were still in the hunt for new defenders, with Udinese's Brazilian Felipe and Anderlecht's Vincent Kompany among the targets. The question of anno domini hangs heavy over the Milan back line, with captain Paolo Maldini now 37, Billy Costacurta 39, Brazilian Cafu 35 and Dutchman Jaap Stam 33. Over the past two seasons, the much-vaunted defence has occasionally looked less than iron-cast. Note the Champions League tussles with Deportivo La Coruna and PSV Eindhoven and, of course, the Istanbul fiasco.

Those reservations aside, a team that contains Brazilian Kaka, Ukraine bullet Andrii Shevchenko, Andrea Pirlo, Portugal's Rui Costa as well as new boys Vieri, Gilardino and Jankulovski is clearly one that is due to shine brightly. Furthermore, after Istanbul, they have a major point to prove in the Champions League.

Paddy Agnew

TACTICS

GIVEN LAST SEASON'S "failures" – second in Serie A and beaten Champions League finalists – Carlo Ancelotti may well change his tactical schemes this season, opting for a three-man defence. Fielding Jaap Stam, Alessandro Nesta and Kakha Kaladze or Paolo Maldini across the back would allow the coach to move Cafu forward from right-back to the right side of midfield, with newcomer Marek Jankulovski on the left flank.

With Andrea Pirlo and Gennaro Gattuso holding the centre of midfield, Ancelotti then may feel happier about using a three-man attack, so often called for by his wealthy *padrone*, club owner and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. This would comprise Kaka (or Rui Costa) behind the two strikers, Alberto Gilardino and Andrii Shevchenko.

Whatever the formation, expect to see more of the languid, hypnotic possession game that made Milan one of the best sides to watch in Italy and Europe last season.

THE STADIUM
Giuseppe Meazza (capacity 82,000)... not even the ugly, violent scenes that marred last spring's Internazionale-Milan Champions League quarter-final can change the fact that this stadium, in the city's San Siro district, is the real temple of Italian football.

THE COACH

Carlo Ancelotti...the 46-year-old will be under huge pressure to leave last season's "failures" in the Champions League and in the Serie A title contest behind him. He gets on well with his players but has sometimes seemed tactically inflexible and slow to react.

KEY MAN
Andrea Pirlo...no player is more important to team shape than the deep-lying playmaker. As PSV proved last season, if you want to cut Milan down to size, close down hard on Pirlo.

MAN TO WATCH
Marek Jankulovski... the Czech is more an attacking left-sided midfielder than a left-back, and in that role could make his first season at Milan a memorable one. Tactically solid, with a firecracker shot.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE
How they qualified: as League runners-up.
Five-year record:
00-01 – 2nd group stage (3rd behind Deportivo La Coruna and Galatasaray)
01-02 – did not qualify
02-03 – winners (beat Juventus 3-2 on pens after 0-0 draw)
03-04 – quarter-finals (lost to Deportivo La Coruna 5-4 on agg)
04-05 – runners-up (lost to Liverpool 3-2 on pens after 3-3 draw).

OLYMPIAKOS

Not so Sollied crew

Defensive limitations and an ageing squad suggest the club will not make the last 16

EVERY DAY THIS summer seemed to bring with it rumours of a big-name arrival at Olympiakos. One moment, strikers were top of the agenda, with Emile Mpenza, Ailton, Patrick Kluivert and Real Madrid youngster Javier Portillo rumoured to be close to signing. The next, it was the turn of midfielders, such as Luis Figo, Freddie Ljungberg and Edgar Davids. Nothing came of the rumours, though, and ultimately club president Socrates Kokkalis had to downsize his transfer ambitions.

Nevertheless, he bought rather well. Centre-back Michalis Kapsis (from Bordeaux) showed what he could do in Greece's Euro 2004-winning campaign, Ivory Coast defensive midfielder Yaya Toure (Metalurh Donetsk) is a very promising youngster, and so is new right-sided midfielder-cum-winger Charilaos Pappas (Apollon).

To replace Brazilian front man Giovanni, who signed for old club Santos, Olympiakos controversially signed Cypriot Michalis Constantinou from arch-rivals Panathinaikos on a free transfer. Another new face is former Mallorca, Barcelona and Espanyol striker Dani.

There has also been a change at the helm. Serb coach Dusan Bayevic resigned just a week after his side clinched the Double last season, having come to the conclusion that he did not have the total support of the board. The club's first choice to take over was Paul Le Guen, who had surprised many by stepping down following three straight championship triumphs with Lyon. However, the Frenchman was not keen, and Kokkalis instead lured Norwegian Trond Sollied away from Belgian champions Club Brugge.

Can Sollied take Olympiakos to the knockout phase of the Champions League for the first time since 1999? Probably not. Defensively they are wanting at the highest level and they boast too many 30-somethings in their ranks.

Nick Bidwell

Controversial switch...Michalis Constantinou arrived from rivals Panathinaikos

TACTICS

TROND SOLLIED rarely veers from a 4-3-3 system, insisting on a high pressing game and pacy attacks. However, on European away days, there is a chance he may pack his midfield in a 3-4-3 or 3-5-2.

The industry and tackling of defensive midfield twins Yaya Toure and Ieroklis Stoltidis will be vital. Midfield is augmented by a right-sided player who likes to push forward – either Charilaos Pappas, Pantelis Kafes or Ioannis Okkas. In attack, Predrag Djordjevic and Rivaldo will operate just off the front man, on the left and right respectively, though Rivaldo often wanders where his instincts take him. Michalis Constantinou should be the lone spearhead, with Dani the alternative.

Antonis Nikopolidis is likely to remain first-choice keeper despite the purchase of Belgian Erwin Lemmens. Gabriel Schurrer, Athanasios Kostoulas, Georgios Anatolakis and Michalis Kapsis will fight it out for the two central defensive berths. The full-backs are Stylianos Venetidis (left) and Dimitrios Mavrogenidis (right).

Christos Patsatzoglu, now fit after two years of injury problems, can play in either full-back position or in central defence.

THE STADIUM
Karaiskaki (capacity 33,334)...one of the few Athens Olympic venues not to have fallen into disrepair since the Games. The place literally rocks on big European nights.

THE COACH
Trond Sollied...a strange appointment. The Norwegian favours an athletic, direct style of play, the antithesis of the subtle approach usually espoused at Olympiakos.

KEY MAN
Rivaldo...at 33, the Brazilian attacking midfielder or forward is clearly on the downslope of his career. But he can still turn a game with his precise left foot and ability to improvise.

MAN TO WATCH
Yaya Toure...the 22-year-old Ivorian is a holding midfielder of great energy and power, with an eye for goal too. The younger brother of Arsenal central defender Kolo Toure.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE
How they qualified: as League champions.
Five-year record:
00-01 – 1st group stage (3rd behind Valencia and Lyon)
01-02 – 1st group stage (4th behind Deportivo La Coruna, Manchester United and Lille)
02-03 – 1st group stage (4th behind Manchester United, Bayer Leverkusen and Maccabi Haifa)
03-04 – group stage (4th behind Juventus, Real Sociedad and Galatasaray)
04-05 – group stage (3rd behind Monaco and Liverpool).

FC PORTO

Co operation

New coach Adriaanse has made some decisive changes to a failing side

Action stations...Lisandro Lopez should get plenty of playing time

ONLY ONE SEASON has passed since FC Porto lifted the Champions League trophy, but there are few similarities between Jose Mourinho's side and the one that will take part in this season's competition. Only three players who started the Final in Gelsenkirchen remain on Porto's books, and one of them, Jorge Costa, is no longer an automatic first-choice.

Mourinho's departure seems to have cursed the club. Last season, three coaches tried and failed to continue down the glorious path laid out by the now Chelsea boss. Neither Luigi Del Neri, Victor Fernandez nor Jose Couceiro could inspire a squad that seemed to lack motivation and determination. The result was a disastrous season, including several embarrassing home defeats in the League. The saving grace was that Porto still managed to finish runners-up to Benfica and therefore qualify directly for the Champions League.

The team's failure to win a trophy in 2005 prompted president Pinto da Costa to ring the changes once again. He hired coach Co Adriaanse, who arrived in Portugal fresh from a successful season at AZ Alkmaar. The charismatic Dutchman immediately promised changes and warned he would run the team with a tight leash. Sure enough, two weeks into pre-season training, Adriaanse cut Brazilian midfielder Leo Lima from the squad, alleging he was lazy and did not follow instructions. The message was clear, and it seemed to work, as the players rallied around the new leader.

Several new signings have also helped raise morale. There are high expectations of Argentinian duo Lucho Gonzalez and Lisandro Lopez, signed from River Plate and Racing Club respectively. Both will feature prominently under Adriaanse, who has tried to help them adapt to European football. The coach is no doubt hoping that, with his assistance, the Argentinians will adjust better than Brazilian midfielder Diego, who did not live up to expectations last season following his move from Santos.

Pedro Pinto

TACTICS

CO ADRIAANSE, a confessed admirer of attacking football, has signalled his intent to live or die by the classic 4-3-3 formation. A lot of time in pre-season was devoted to perfecting this scheme, with the coach requesting his midfield trio to exchange short passes and play the ball to the wings as soon as possible.

Porto's strength is in the skill and creativity of their midfield and attack, so Adriaanse wants the ball to be moved upfield as quickly as possible. The responsibility for increasing the tempo of the build-up should fall on the shoulders of Lucho Gonzalez, who will be the link between defensive midfielder Raul Meireles and attack-minded Diego.

While Adriaanse's Porto have shown they will be dangerous going forward, there is cause for concern at the back. With inspirational but ageing captain Jorge Costa no longer a first-choice, the Dragons' defence lacks a true leader, and the partnership of Pedro Emanuel and Ricardo Costa has shown signs of permeability.

THE STADIUM

Dragao (capacity 51,000)...Porto baptised their new stadium in style, celebrating winning the Champions League and domestic titles shortly after moving in in 2004. But four home defeats last season prompted president Pinto da Costa to declare he was considering changing the name to that of the old stadium, Das Antas.

THE COACH

Co Adriaanse... quickly lived up to his reputation for being a disciplinarian by imposing a "my way or the highway" approach. The Dutchman showed no fear in dropping first-teamers Jorge Costa and Nuno Valente and has promised more changes.

KEY MAN

Benni McCarthy... the South African's goals were crucial to Porto's Champions League victory in 2004, and though he misfired last season, Adriaanse refused to countenance his sale this summer.

MAN TO WATCH

Lucho Gonzalez...much is expected of this versatile midfielder. His skill, vision and work rate has prompted the usually stoic Adriaanse to praise his performances.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE

How they qualified: as League runners-up.
Five-year record:
00-01 – 3rd qualifying round (lost to Anderlecht 1-0 on agg)
01-02 – 2nd group stage (4th behind Real Madrid, Panathinaikos and Sparta Prague)
02-03 – did not qualify
03-04 – winners (beat Monaco 3-0)
04-05 – 2nd round (lost to Internazionale 4-2 on agg).

PSV EINDHOVEN

Hard act to follow

Last season's semi-finalists have had to buy a whole new midfield

TO MANY OBSERVERS, PSV Eindhoven were the surprise team in last season's Champions League, when they reached the semi-finals and then lost only on away goals to Milan. They certainly surprised themselves since in seven previous attempts the club had never got past the (first) group stage.

What was even more surprising was that PSV achieved this having sold their entire front line of Arjen Robben, Mateja Kezman and Dennis Rommedahl.

Filling a hole...Osmar Ferreyra is one of the new midfield recruits

This season, the club will start out with a new midfield after selling Mark Van Bommel (to Barcelona), Johann Vogel (Milan) and Park Ji-sung (Manchester United), and coach Guus Hiddink admits that a repeat of last term's performance will be a tall order. "We've lost the engine of the team," he says. "I expect that it will be much tougher this time. So I don't think we can equal the results of last season."

The midfield replacements are Mika Vayrynen (from Heerenveen), Timmy Simons (Club Brugge) and Osmar Ferreyra (CSKA Moscow), while PSV have also been keen to take Salomon Kalou from Feyenoord to replace Park. However, at press time the Rotterdam club had refused to play ball.

With all this team building work ahead, questions have been raised about whether Hiddink will have the time to do it since he has agreed to simultaneously coach the Australian national team for the remainder of their World Cup qualifying campaign – and beyond, if they reach the finals. He believes it won't be a problem; time will tell.

At least Hiddink's solid defence is still in place, and the players know the words "first-round exit" and "PSV" are no longer synonymous.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

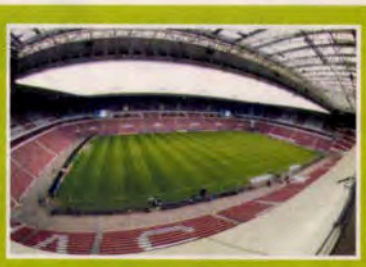
TACTICS

GUUS HIDDINK OPTS for a 4-3-3 formation in which the right-winger can drop back into midfield. Last season, Park Ji-sung played that role superbly; this term Jefferson Farfan or Salomon Kalou (presuming he has joined from Feyenoord) should take the role. If the right-winger does drop deeper, midfielder Mika Vayrynen will be able to take the role that used to be Mark Van Bommel's – playing in behind the strikers.

Phillip Cocu and Timmy Simons have controlling duties in midfield. The latter often changes position with central defender Wilfred Bouma. Ibrahim Afellay, John De Jong and Osmar Ferreyra provide cover.

In defence, Theo Lucius will probably get the nod over Andre Ooijer at right-back. Keeper Gomes, central defender Alex and left-back Lee Young-pyo should all keep their places and provide a solid defence.

Compared to last season PSV may have difficulties when pushing forward. DaMarcus Beasley will play on the left flank, while the quick Robert or target man Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink is the central striker. Farfan can also be used as a striker as well as a right-winger. If Kalou has not been signed, Hiddink could go 4-4-2.



THE STADIUM

Philips (capacity 35,270)...this is no multi-million pound modern football temple. It was built in 1913, though it has been renovated and enlarged on several occasions.

THE COACH

Guus Hiddink...the 58-year-old is the heart and soul of PSV. Coach, director – but now also Australia's national team boss. Could it be a bit too much even for this clever and highly-experienced coach?

KEY MAN

Phillip Cocu...the leader of the pack who provides the balance of the team. His experience with Barcelona brought some sense of awareness to PSV that the Champions League consists of more than one round – significantly, they got beyond the group stage for the first time last season, which was Cocu's first back at the club.

MAN TO WATCH

Alex...Brazilian giant in defence, solid as a rock. Could be in his last season at PSV, though, since Chelsea and Internazionale are reportedly interested in signing him.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE

How they qualified as League champions.

Five-year record:

00-01 – 1st group stage (3rd behind Anderlecht and Manchester United)

01-02 – 1st group stage (3rd behind Nantes and Galatasaray)

02-03 – 1st group stage (4th behind Arsenal, Borussia Dortmund and Auxerre)

03-04 – group stage (3rd behind Deportivo La Coruna and Monaco)

04-05 – semi-finals (lost to Milan on away goals after 3-3 agg draw).

REAL MADRID

Time for a trophy

The recent galactico-buying pattern has been ditched as the club seek silverware

Whack!...the signing of Thomas "Ogre" Gravesen bucked the galactico-buying trend

GONE ARE THE days when summer in Madrid meant a solitary galactico grasping a gleaming white shirt and smiling from ear to ear while president Florentino Perez talked about how the new signing – the best player in the world – was born to play for Real Madrid.

Last season, Michael Owen was the galactico but there was something missing. There was a feeling that "simply" scoring regularly was not enough at a club where the aesthetic demands are so high. Besides, while David Beckham, Ronaldo and Zinedine Zidane arrived alone, with no one to diminish their glorious glow, last summer others arrived. What's more, they were two centre-backs: Walter Samuel and Jonathan Woodgate – the former has since departed, the latter has yet to make his debut.

Woodgate, nearing fitness at last, has become Madrid's "other signing" this summer as the club bury the galactico model after two years without a trophy.

Luis Figo, the first of the solitary galacticos, has departed, and Owen looked set to leave as we went to press. Madrid now boast five players who were not at the club when last season began. That is more signings than in the three previous seasons put together.

More than that, three of them are rejections of galacticism. Thomas Gravesen has been billed as the ogre, Uruguayan Carlos Diogo is there to offer defensive cover at right-back (or in midfield) and Pablo Garcia picked up more cards than anyone else in Spain last season.

This summer's galactico is Robinho but even he is different, in being young and hungry. He may not be the real star, either. Instead, it could be another Brazilian, Julio Baptista, who is unstoppable on his day.

Surely Madrid can't go another year empty-handed; surely they can't keep on exiting the Champions League a stage earlier than the previous year, as they have done for the past three seasons. Can they?

Sid Lowe

TACTICS

VANDERLEI LUXEMBURGO has admitted his tactics at the end of last season, when Madrid twice went on long unbeaten runs but still could not catch Barcelona, were a solution to an emergency situation. This season, he has said, Madrid will play more elaborate, less direct football and look to dominate possession far more. Yet he still wants Madrid to play far quicker than they did in the two years before he arrived.

Iker Casillas is fast becoming the world's best keeper, and he could well have a new centre-back in front of him – Jonathan Woodgate – alongside the familiar faces of Michel Salgado, Roberto Carlos and the ever-impressive Ivan Helguera.

David Beckham will continue in his more natural right midfield role, forming one point of a diamond. Thomas Gravesen (or Pablo Garcia) will play at the base, with Zinedine Zidane at the head and Julio Baptista on the left. Ronaldo and Robinho (perhaps alternating with Raul) will play up front. However, don't rule out changes, especially as Zidane has said he can't see himself playing 40 games, dropping Raul is virtually unthinkable and Baptista would be wasted on the left.

● THE STADIUM
Bernabeu (capacity 72,000)...for ever undergoing change, with new restaurants and gimmicks emerging by the day. The new stand is a disappointment, sitting incongruously a couple of metres lower than the rest of the stadium, but the steep-sided arena remains a great sight. President Florentino Perez has promised a retractable roof too.

● THE COACH

Vanderlei Luxemburgo...the Brazilian, who calls himself the Commander, has instilled some discipline (disguised by an easy-going man-management style), got his team working and is getting results where others failed. He is also presiding over the most Brazilian Real Madrid ever. Could bring the good times back.

● KEY MAN
Michel Salgado...every time he was missing last season, Madrid suffered horribly. Now, Salgado is fit, and has Carlos Diogo to take some of the pressure off the right-back slot.

● MAN TO WATCH
Julio Baptista... his marauding power and goalscoring is likely to be the most spectacular thing on display at the Bernabeu.

● CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE
How they qualified: as League runners-up.
Five-year record:
00-01 – semi-finals (lost to Bayern Munich 3-1 on agg)
01-02 – winners (beat Bayer Leverkusen 2-1)
02-03 – semi-finals (lost to Juventus 4-3 on agg)
03-04 – quarter-finals (lost to Monaco on away goals after 5-5 agg draw)
04-05 – 2nd round (lost to Juventus 2-1 on agg).

SCHALKE

Quality control

The Ruhr side have more class acts than four years ago

ONE THING IS sure: the current Schalke line-up is far stronger than the one that finished bottom of their pool in the 2001-02 Champions League first group stage. Four years ago, the *Gelsenkirchener* arguably boasted too many journeymen and players who were past their prime (midfielders Andy Moller and Jiri Nemec to name just two). That is no longer the case. Schalke have a much greater quota of top-class performers, and with bright young coach Ralf Rangnick intelligently pulling the strings, they certainly have the potential to make it to the last 16.

Brazilian striker Ailton, Schalke's top scorer last season, has moved on, to Besiktas in Turkey. But few at the Ruhr club were shedding tears. Ailton's prima donna antics had been grating with team-mates as well as management. What is more, Schalke have an outstanding replacement in 23-year-old German international Kevin Kuranyi, bought for £5million from Stuttgart.

Other new arrivals are promising young Danish striker Soren Larsen (from Djurgardens of Sweden) and two fine midfielders, snapped up on free transfers – Bosnian Zlatan Bajramovic (Freiburg) and former Werder Bremen star Fabian Ernst, a player rated by many as the best passer in the Bundesliga.

Ailton was not the only Schalke striker to head for the hills. Unhappy with a lack of first-team football, young German international Mike Hanke chose to leave for Wolfsburg and was joined in the departure lounge by Belgian midfielder Sven Vermant (to Club Brugge) and Dutch utility man Niels Oude Kamphuis (Borussia Monchengladbach). Meanwhile, German Under-21 midfielder or attacker Michael Delura has been sent on loan to Hannover.

Nick Bidwell

Forward march...Kevin Kuranyi is the replacement for Ailton

TACTICS

RALF RANGNICK thinks Schalke will be more flexible in their attacking approach now that Ailton has gone, and he has a point. The Brazilian's explosive pace often meant Schalke would overdo the long balls in his direction. With the new attacking players at their disposal, Schalke should be better at keeping possession and much neater in their build-up.

Rangnick prefers a 4-4-2, with Kevin Kuranyi partnered by one of the Danes – Ebbe Sand and Soren Larsen – up front. The midfield diamond features Lincoln on the shoulder of the strikers, Fabian Ernst (centre/right), Zlatan Bajramovic (centre/left) and Christian Poulsen as the enforcer.

Marcelo Bordon and Mladen Krstajic form a solid central defensive unit, while both full-back berths are occupied by natural midfielders: Hamit Altintop on the right and Levan Kobiashvili on the left.

A 4-3-3 is another possibility. In this formation, Kuranyi would be flanked by Larsen (left) and German international Gerald Asamoah (right). Rangnick can also go 4-2-3-1, but whichever system he chooses, expect a great deal of tactical shuffling in the course of a game.

THE STADIUM

Veltins Arena (capacity 54,000)...formerly known as the Arena AufSchalke, it was recently renamed following a sponsorship deal with a brewery. When Schalke moved in four years ago, the players initially seemed intimidated by the cauldron-like atmosphere. Now, they relish it.

THE COACH

Ralf Rangnick... calm and professorial, with more than a hint of Arsene Wenger in his make-up. The 47-year-old could well be the man to eventually succeed Jurgen Klinsmann as boss of Germany. Excels at organisation and training ground drills.

KEY MAN

Lincoln...the little Brazilian playmaker is simply irreplaceable. A creator of the highest order and a regular goalscorer. Also a menace from free-kicks.

MAN TO WATCH

Soren Larsen...after failing to bring in Milan Baros on loan this summer, Schalke turned to the young Danish striker, paying Swedish club Djurgardens a value-for-money £1.4million for him. Has a bustling style, a good left-foot shot and is strong in the air.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE

How they qualified: as League runners-up.
Five-year record:
00-01 – did not qualify
01-02 – 1st group stage (4th behind Panathinaikos, Arsenal and Mallorca)
02-03 – did not qualify
03-04 – did not qualify
04-05 – did not qualify.

SPARTA PRAGUE

Creaking structure

The cracks are all too apparent in the Czech champions' set-up

Shoring up...Zdenek Pospech has arrived to help bolster Sparta's defence

SPARTA COACH Jaroslav Hrebik is also the owner of a building company and he will need all his knowledge of construction in the months ahead to keep the Czech champions from collapsing. With numerous comings and goings at the club this summer, Hrebik has a gargantuan job on his hands to produce a competitive line-up in Europe. It may be asking too much of him even to improve on the club's dire showing last season, when they collected just one point from six group games.

A number of key personnel bade farewell to Sparta in the close season. Front man Michal Meduna and defender Petr Johana left for Turkish side Manisaspor, attacker Milan Pacanda and midfielder Petr Vorisek both emigrated to Austria, joining Wacker Tirol and Pasching respectively, while midfielder Ales Urbanek returned to Moscow Spartak after a loan spell since Sparta simply did not have the funds to sign him permanently.

But of all the departures, none has been more regretted than that of national team striker Tomas Jun, who rather surprisingly chose Trabzonspor of Turkey over Premiership clubs Fulham and Birmingham. Jun, top scorer in the Czech League last term with 14 goals, will be badly missed. His replacement, Miroslav Slepicka, from Slovan Liberec, is simply not of the same calibre.

Slovak midfielder Karol Kisel, who also arrived from Liberec, is a much more promising recruit. But it was on defensive reinforcements that Sparta concentrated most of their energies and cash. In came right-back Zdenek Pospech (Banik Ostrava), centre-back and ex-Sparta trainee Petr Lukas (Liberec), and international stopper Adam Petrous (Austria Wien). Another new face is former Under-21 sweeper Vaclav Drobny, who after three injury-plagued seasons with Strasbourg and Aston Villa (the latter on loan) is anxious to make up for lost time.

Nick Bidwell

TACTICS

JAROSLAV HREBIK preaches the gospel of tactical discipline, solid organisation and physical strength, and usually goes with a solid 4-4-2 system. However, that is not to say that this is a team devoid of flair. Midfielders Lukas Zelenka and Karol Kisel both have plenty of finesse, while veteran national team forward Karel Poborsky remains a potent attacking threat on the right courtesy of his tricks and pace.

In front of experienced keeper Jaromir Blazek, the first-choice centre-backs are Petr Lukas and Adam Petrous, with Zdenek Pospech (right) and Michal Kadlec (left) likely to start at full-back. Vaclav Drobny is an alternative in central defence, while Martin Petras and Pavel Pergl provide cover in a number of positions at the back.

In midfield, Tomas Sivok (or Martin Hasek) will do the lion's share of fetching and carrying, while Poborsky and Kisel will push forward on the right and left respectively. Zelenka is the field marshal. The Sparta attack should feature the forceful Miroslav Slepicka in alliance with diminutive Miroslav Matusovic, a player of no little mobility and skill.

● THE STADIUM
Toyota Arena (capacity 20,600)...although commercial considerations have brought about an official rebranding, Sparta fans still affectionately know it as the Letna after the park in which it is situated. Modernised in the mid-1990s but the club almost went bankrupt as a result of the facelift.

● THE COACH
Jaroslav Hrebik... appointed to replace the sacked Frantisek Straka midway through last season and is in his second spell in charge. In the first (2001-02), he led Sparta to the Champions League second group stage only to be sacked because of the team's poor domestic form. A rather dour character.

● KEY MAN
Lukas Zelenka...the creative hub, with excellent technique, vision and scoring ability. Sparta's most expensive signing at £500,000 from Anderlecht.

● MAN TO WATCH
Michal Kadlec...left-back who broke into the team last season and caught the eye with sound positional play, good use of the ball and dynamism. Son of former Czech Republic and Kaiserslautern libero Miroslav Kadlec.

● CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FACT FILE
How they qualified: as League champions.
Five-year record:
00-01 – 1st group stage (4th behind Arsenal, Lazio and Shakhtar Donetsk)
01-02 – 2nd group stage (3rd behind Real Madrid and Panathinaikos)
02-03 – 3rd qualifying round (lost to Genk on away goals after 4-4 agg draw)
03-04 – 2nd round (lost to Milan 4-1 on agg)
04-05 – group stage (4th behind Lyon, Manchester United and Fenerbahce).

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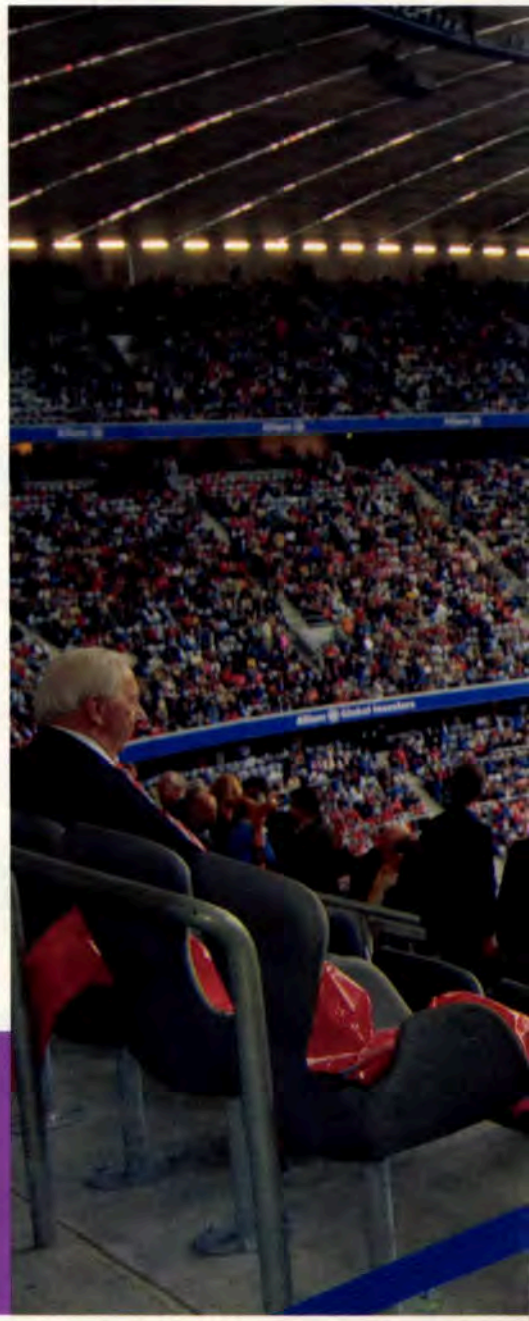
With less than a year until the finals, organising president Franz Beckenbauer tells Keir Radnedge he is in confident mood about Germany's progress both on and off the pitch

Raring to go



How do you assess Jurgen Klinsmann's work after his first year as national coach?
You must respect the way Klinsmann has gone about his work. He has brought new ideas, a new way of working and new young players, in whom he has instilled the sort of positive spirit he had as a player. People worry that we have slipped down the world rankings but this is only because we have not been playing any competitive matches, which have a higher value in the ranking system.

Did you enjoy watching Germany at the Confederations Cup, on home soil?
Yes. So did the fans, I think, and that is good news for the entire World Cup. You could see how important it is for the hosts to do well in 2002 when a small football nation like Korea reached the semi-finals. Being hosts can also help the players. For example, France won as hosts in 1998, just as we did when I was captain of Germany in 1974. The only cautionary note is that being hosts can also have a boomerang effect because expectations are so unreasonably high.

How do you cope with the pressure of leading the German organising operation?
I was captain of Bayern Munich when I was a very young player. Since I was 20 or 21 I have been used to leadership roles, so it's no different now. In one way I am in an even better situation because I am surrounded by a highly-motivated team working alongside me on the World Cup project.

The FIFA president always says after a World Cup that "this has been the best-organised World Cup ever". Will Sepp Blatter be able to say that with a clear conscience this time next year?
I was born under the star sign Virgo and we are optimists by nature. So both on the pitch and off it I am certain we'll stage a fabulous World Cup. I know the media in Germany does not always appear to share my view. But I travel extensively at home and abroad and my impression is very different to the one projected in the media. The qualities for which Germany is respected – hard work and a high standard of living – are still in place.

What sort of legacy do you want from the 2006 World Cup?
For two months Germany will be the centre of world attention so the World Cup represents a big opportunity for our country. That also means major opportunities, of which we must take advantage so this World Cup leaves a sporting, cultural and commercial legacy that can be felt for another 50 years.

This is not just a sports event, is it?
The football is the centre of the World Cup. Without the football, there would be no World Cup. Never before, in the entire history of the World Cup, do I believe there has been such an ambitious support plan. It's all based on the realisation that very few businesses around the world are unaffected by football – whether they are connected through formal contracts or because the employees are fans and bring that enthusiasm into their working lives. We want to harness all that. Really, in a football-mad country like Germany it should not be difficult.

What is the greatest challenge?
Easy – ticketing. We could have sold the tickets many times over and yet one of the problems, perversely, is also ensuring that the stadia are full to their capacities. We have all seen at previous World Cups and European Championships that even at big matches seats can be left empty. It gets shown on television and naturally that angers fans who were not able to get a ticket themselves. If that happens next year it will be infuriating. If we think there is such a danger then we will react as soon as we can to try to prevent it.

'We want this World Cup to leave a sporting, cultural and commercial legacy that can be felt for another 50 years'

How?
What's most important is to ensure that sponsors and national associations realise the importance of letting us know in good time if their allocation of tickets is not going to be taken up. I can guarantee this: accommodation and transport will be fine but right up until the very last minute of the World Cup we will be worrying about tickets.

Three years ago it was reported that you wanted to set aside 35,000 rooms for exclusive use by World Cup tourists. Are foreign tourists going to "buy in" to this system?
All tour groups coming to the World Cup should liaise with our accommodation system. That will help us to help both them and other visitors. We want everyone to have a great time, so of course the smoother everything works the better. There are always exceptions but I doubt whether the vast majority of fans could enjoy the World Cup experience if they are worrying all the time about whether they have a hotel room that night.

Setting the stage...Beckenbauer at Munich's new Allianz Arena, one of the World Cup venues

Huge sums are being invested in security, but at the Confederations Cup we saw at least three fans running on to the pitches. Sepp Blatter was not amused. Can you tighten up even further?

I am confident that our security arrangements will be the best possible and prepared for all eventualities. We were very embarrassed last year when some German hooligans made a scene at our friendly match against Slovakia in Bratislava. That should not happen again. Our intelligence about fans is top quality and I am confident nothing will spoil the true fans' enjoyment of the matches. Of course, it's a problem trying to control what may happen between people who want to make trouble away from the stadia. But certainly in and around the venues everything will be under control.

The run-up to the last World Cup was dominated by arguments within FIFA about finance and the presidency. Will there be a repeat?

As for the FIFA presidency, the elections have now been moved out of World Cup year, so that will not be an issue. As far as finance is concerned, our aim, as organisers, is "only" to balance the books. We are not looking to make money but just to cover our hosting costs. We have had a lot of help from our government, which has invested 430million euros [£300m], much of it in infrastructure that has ongoing value for the entire country. Another 1.5bn euros [£1bn] has been spent on redeveloping the stadia, and the government has provided 3.9bn euros [£2.7bn] for road improvements and another 500m euros [£350m] in traffic control systems.

On the subject of traffic, is it true your VIP car will be a Korean Hyundai rather than a Mercedes, BMW or Porsche?

I can't help that. The contract for cars is a matter for FIFA. Hyundai was the official partner in 2002 so it had first option and was obviously happy to continue. That's FIFA business, not mine.

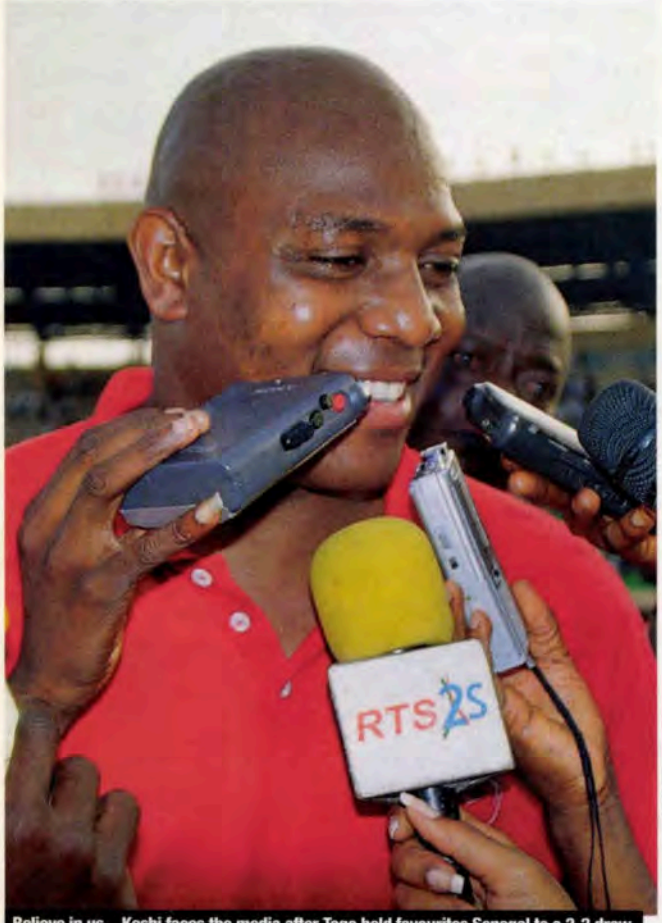
After the World Cup job is finished, can we expect to see you stand for the presidency of UEFA?

Lennart Johansson is the UEFA president, he's doing a great job and he's also a friend of mine. If he decides to stand down then that's a matter for him in 2007. I have enough to do thinking about the once-in-a-lifetime job that is organising a World Cup. And that's in 2006.

Stephen KESHI

Nigerian coach set to take Togo through

Common purpose...two more wins will complete the Togo fairytale



Believe in us...Keshi faces the media after Togo held favourites Senegal to a 2-2 draw

INDIGENOUS COACHING TALENT has been slow in coming to the fore in Africa, but the continent suddenly finds itself with a new generation of former professionals showing their managerial expertise.

Retired internationals Kalusha Bwalya, Badou Ezaki and Stephen Keshi are among those who have returned to Africa to coach after spending most of their playing careers in Europe.

The new wave understand the foibles and follies of African football's officialdom, and the mentality of the players, but they also bring with them the discipline and values of professionalism they have learnt during their playing days. Their success as footballers also earns them respect; African coaches who did not have a playing career abroad have found such respect difficult to gain on their own continent, where imported coaches are seen as far superior and desirable.

Keshi's achievements with the national team of tiny Togo is helping to dispel the myth about Africans' limited coaching abilities. The Nigerian, in charge since April last year, has guided the Togolese to the top of their World Cup qualifying group, and they will book an unlikely ticket to the finals in Germany if they win their last two games.

Keshi was among Africa's successful exports to the leagues of Europe, reaching the Cup-winners Cup Final with Anderlecht of Belgium in 1990 and then spending several fruitful years at Strasbourg in France.

He also captained Nigeria to triumph at the African Nations Cup in 1994 and during their qualification for the World Cup of the same year, although a rift with coach Clemens Westerhof restricted his playing time in the finals.

The 43-year-old, who has coaching qualifications from the Dutch federation, had previously worked as an assistant coach with his own national team before taking his current post.

The national team of Togo, a sliver of land sandwiched along with Benin between big neighbours Nigeria and Ghana, have periodically made it to the African Nations Cup finals but have never come anywhere near to World Cup qualification in the past.

Keshi, who divides his time between his home and family in San Francisco and the Togolese capital Lome, insists Togo have always had the potential for footballing success but never quite been united enough to achieve it. This time, it's different.

"It has been a real team effort, where everyone has pulled together and we have managed to get the results," he says. "There is so much potential in the country but they have had a problem with coaching and teaching, which has not really been up to scratch.

"What I have tried to do is work on these areas, and I have been helped because the team has a lot of professionals from countries like France, Switzerland and Germany. We have worked hard on the tactics and it's been going really well. We have been living like a real happy family. I have to give credit to my players. They have been wonderful."

But even Keshi admits surprise that Togo are poised to finish ahead of the likes of Senegal, quarter-finalists at the 2002 World Cup, and Zambia in their qualifying group.

"I thought it would take one or two years longer to get to the point where we had a really strong team," he says. "But all the work we have put in has paid off. There really has been a 100 per cent focus; everyone is in this together. There is a lot of competition for places and it has been really good to see everyone fighting for a common goal. It is possible for us to qualify."

To do that, Togo need only beat bottom side Liberia at home on September 4 and then fourth-placed Congo in Brazzaville in October to book their ticket for Germany.

'I thought it would take a year or two more before we had a really strong team, but the work we have put in has paid off'

Keshi says: "We are preparing the same way for each game as if we were playing France or Brazil. We just have to be serious and focused and see what we can do. The players know what is at stake. They have fought so hard to get into this position. Where we are now has nothing to do with luck."

Mark Gleeson

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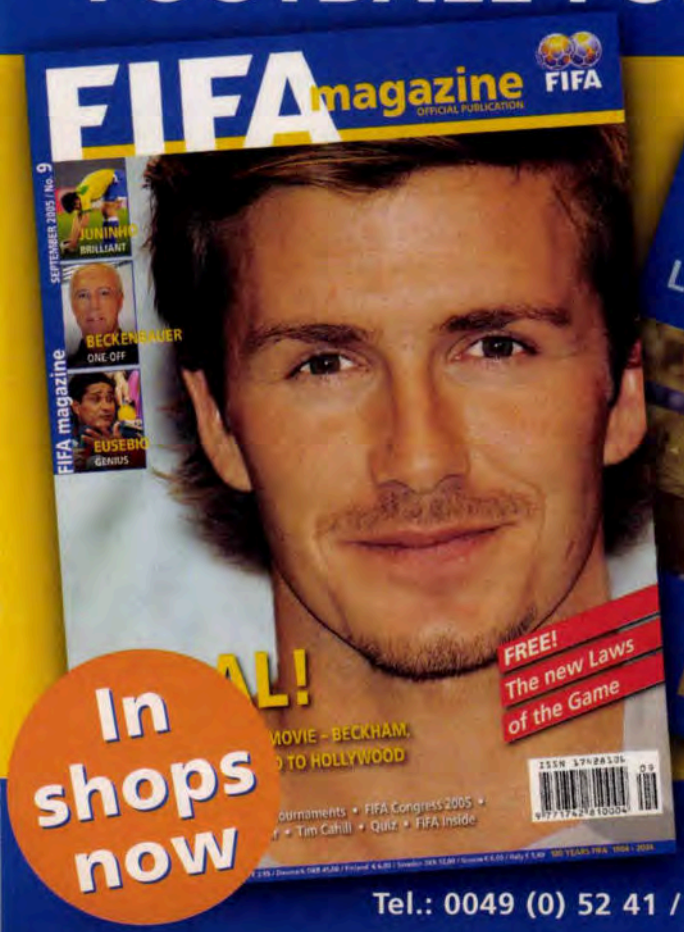

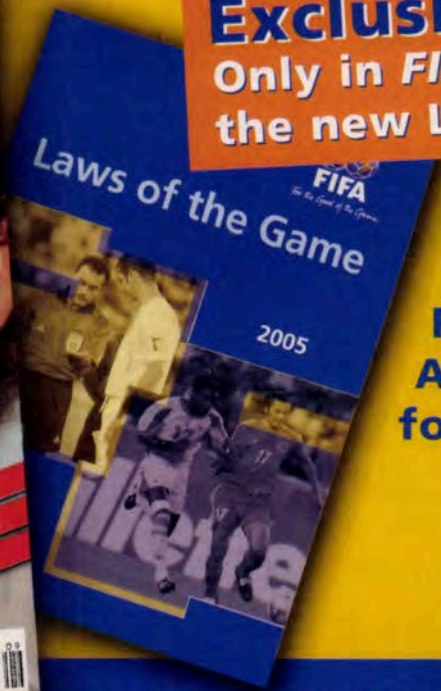

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WS WORLD SOCCER GLOBAL VIEW Paul Gardner

England play dangerous game

The Premier League has kicked off with the usual unpunished violence

IT HAPPENS EVERY year. I watch the start of the English season and in no time at all, I'm in shock. All it takes is a few games, maybe only one game, for the sheer crudity of most of the Premier League teams to register. Take away the two or three clubs that have any chance of winning the League, and what are you left with? A very ordinary bunch of teams playing football at a speed that their players' talents cannot sustain, and with a physicality that leaves one – well, me, anyway – trembling for the life and limb of the participants.

Before this season's opening games, I happened upon the following quote from Portsmouth midfielder Gary O'Neil, talking about the club's new Colombian signing, Jhon Viafara: "He only needs to get used to the pace of the game here."

One has heard this time and time again, the famous "adaptation" supposedly necessary for those languid Latinos. Well, OK, but I would suggest that it's not the speed so much as the slam-bang contact that foreigners have to get used to.

We'll go back five years and listen to a Frenchman who was playing his first Premier League season: "I'm committing wicked fouls that would have horrified me six months ago, but that's how you have to play in England…At the beginning I pulled up after every tackle, convinced the referee would blow his whistle. But play went on, so I had to adapt…Going for a high ball I use my elbow or I'm dead. I surprise myself by committing wicked fouls, simply because you have to be physical." The words of Thierry Henry.

Around the same time, another Frenchman, Frank Leboeuf, had this to say: "I have never seen as much violence on a pitch as in England… referees don't exist."

They do exist, of course, but they do so at the middle of a constant tug-of-war between those who want to "clean things up" and those who favour the "let 'em play" approach. And you don't have to watch for very long to know that the English game is in no danger of being cleaned up. The scything tackles and the mistimed slides and the clattering contact were all there on this season's first day, all being viewed benevolently by the referees, all presumably coming under the heading of "competitive" football – the very quality, we are asked to believe, that makes the Premier League so popular throughout the world. It is also the very quality that makes English football so incapable of producing skilful players. A Ronaldinho, a Zidane, a Riquelme, a Del Piero, a soccer artist? Forget it. Won't happen.

The English bias in favour of slug-it-out football received appalling confirmation in the first week of the season. Steve Bennett, one of the stricter of the Premier League referees, sent off Newcastle's Jermaine Jenas for a crunching foul on Arsenal midfielder Gilberto Silva. A crude, dangerous foul justly punished. Twenty-four hours later came the astonishing news that Bennett had reviewed the foul on tape and had requested that the red card be downgraded to a yellow – a wish the FA immediately accepted.

'The media's view that Jenas's foul was not malicious shows an alarming ignorance of the rules'

Bennett's rethink had plenty of supporters. It was suggested that the red card was harsh because Jenas was going for the ball, and, anyway, Jenas is just not the sort of player to go around fouling people. It seems that there will never be a shortage of people looking to excuse foul play. Jenas's past record is irrelevant. And the repetition in the media that the foul was not malicious shows an alarming ignorance of the rules. Rule 12, which deals with fouls, starts: "A direct free-kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following six offences in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless, or using excessive force…" The list of fouls – kicking, tripping, pushing etc – follows.

Felled…Jenas brings down Gilberto Silva

That quote is as significant for what it does not say as for what it does. Ten years ago, all reference to "intent" (except for hand ball) was removed from rule 12. It matters not whether a foul is deliberate or not. What matters is whether it is careless, or reckless, or involves excessive force.

Regulations breached

FIFA will no doubt have much to say about the downgrading of the red card because it is a flagrant breach of FIFA regulations, which do not allow such reversals.

Those of us in favour of the limited use of television replays during a game to settle such factual matters as whether the ball has crossed the goal-line or not also have reason to be upset with Bennett and the FA. Because it is exactly this sort of post-game reviewing and changing of decisions that FIFA uses as ammunition to defend its blanket opposition to any use of replays.

It has a point. If a referee is permitted to change his mind on a red card, why should he not be allowed to cancel a goal when he sees television evidence – maybe the day after the game – proving the ball did not cross the line?

Crossing the line, it seems to me, is exactly what English football assuredly does. The line between the physicality that invigorates the sport and the violence that destroys it. Referee Bennett and the FA have started the new season by making a mockery of that absolutely crucial difference.

Bayern triumph in numbers game

Simon Banks on the monetary winners and losers in the Champions League

BAYERN MUNICH have earned more money – £131million – than any other club from the Champions League since it began in 1992 as UEFA's repackaging of the European Cup. That is the most eye-catching detail from the payment list recently published by Europe's governing body.

The figures show how, over the 13 years since UEFA introduced a league format to what had been a strictly knockout tournament, the payouts have contributed to the polarisation of wealth towards Europe's elite, specifically those clubs from the "big four" markets of Germany, Italy, Spain and England.

Of the top 20 earners from the 105 clubs that have reached the group stages, three are from Germany, four from England, four from Spain and four from Italy. Lyon and Monaco (in ninth and 16th place respectively), PSV Eindhoven and Ajax (18th and 19th) and FC Porto (15th) make up the numbers.

'Because Germany is the largest TV market, its clubs get the most money'

Bayern's pole position may surprise many since the German champions do not have the most successful playing record. However, UEFA's payments are based on the value of individual television deals in each market. And because Germany is the largest TV market, its clubs get the most money. For example, when Bayern won the competition in 2001 they received £31m, the highest single-season payment UEFA has made. In contrast, Porto received just £17.5m when they won last year.

The apparently iniquitous system of payment is further highlighted when Porto's overall record is viewed. They have reached the group stages of the Champions League 10 times and won it once yet have received less income than Chelsea, who have managed just three appearances and not won it.

There are a number of reasons why UEFA does not distribute the money it receives from the sale of TV rights and sponsorship purely on the basis of merit. Some are valid, some less so. The main reason, of course, is the political pressure, backed by the veiled threat of a breakaway superleague, applied to UEFA by the biggest clubs, under the aegis of the G-14 group.

Another reason is that if a club like Porto were to receive the same money as Bayern and Man United, the effect on the competitiveness of the Portuguese League would be disastrous. While the regular Champions League entrants from Europe's top four leagues dominate their domestic scene because they can afford to outspend their rivals, the gap between Porto and the rest of their top flight would have become unbridgeable if they had received £31m for winning the Champions League.

The current pay-out arrangements may be contributing to the increasing disparity of income between Europe's haves and have-nots, but it is a compromise between commercial and sporting interests and is probably about as fair as is possible.

One figure UEFA has chosen not to highlight is the fall in total revenue redistributed, from £356.5m in 2003 to £277m in 2004 and £280m in 2005. It now faces the major challenge of satisfying the demands of the big clubs while still seeking to reward sporting achievement and all against a backdrop of falling revenues.

Jackpot...Bayern's 2001 Champions League triumph earned them a record £31million pay-out from UEFA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE TOP EARNERS 1992-2005

1	Bayern Munich (Ger)	£131.0m
2	Manchester United (Eng)	£121.3m
3	Real Madrid (Spa)	£119.9m
4	Juventus (Ita)	£103.1m
5	Milan (Ita)	£92.6m
6	Arsenal (Eng)	£91.4m
7	Barcelona (Spa)	£80.1m
8	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)	£77.7m
9	Lyon (Fra)	£68.1m
10	Valencia (Spa)	£60.2m
11	Deportivo La Coruna (Spa)	£60.1m
12	Borussia Dortmund (Ger)	£59.9m
13	Chelsea (Eng)	£50.9m
14	Lazio (Ita)	£50.1m
15	FC Porto (Por)	£49.4m
16	Monaco (Fra)	£49.0m
17	Liverpool (Eng)	£45.4m
18	PSV Eindhoven (Hol)	£43.3m
19	Ajax (Hol)	£43.2m
20	Internazionale (Ita)	£39.5m

Hungary's Real tribute to Puskas

Stars turn out to honour one of the all-time greats

Awesome...Puskas (front row, centre) and his Madrid team-mates after their 1960 European Cup win

ALFREDO DI STEFANO needs a stick while Jose Santamaria, Antonio Ruiz and Amancio Amaro all have grey hair now and it's thinning and receding. But they were well enough to make the trip to Budapest for the testimonial of great old team-mate Ferenc Puskas.

In contrast, the Hungarian was not well enough even to attend the game, between a Hungarian League XI and Real Madrid in the former Nep stadium which now bears his name. However, he did meet some of the visiting party for half an hour in his nursing home room.

Puskas, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease among other ailments, has only the haziest memory of his former life as one of the world's greatest footballers. "I've been to visit him on quite a few occasions now, and he's not too bad, though his memory isn't what it should be," said Santamaria, the Uruguay-born centre-back who played with Puskas in the Madrid team that thumped Eintracht Frankfurt 7-3 in the 1960 European Cup Final.

Madrid's present heroes won the match 3-1 with goals from Zinedine Zidane (penalty), Ronaldo and Michael Owen. Iker Casillas, Roberto Carlos, Raul, new signing Julio Baptista and David Beckham also played for the visitors. The Hungarians all wore the name "Ferenc Puskas" across the shoulders of their shirts, and a capacity 40,000 crowd turned out.

Despite the strength of association between Puskas and Madrid, the 1960 victory at Hampden Park was the inside-left's only European Cup winner's medal. He missed the victory over Reims in the 1959 Final through injury and was on the losing side against Benfica in the 1962 Final – despite scoring a hat-trick – and against Internazionale in 1964. By 1966, when Madrid regained the trophy, against Partizan Belgrade, Puskas was only being fielded in prestige friendlies.

In terms of worldwide fame, Madrid's current galacticos far outstrip their legendary predecessors. But being famous is not the same as being great. Beckham and co are famous; Puskas was a great... even if, sadly, he cannot remember why.

Hod does the job

Wolves fans were far from happy when Glenn Hoddle was appointed manager in the middle of last season. But three matches into the new Championship campaign and a 2-1 home win over Hull made it 21 League games unbeaten, their longest run for 82 years. Better than legendary managers Frank Buckley and Stan Cullis. And they never managed England either.

In praise of Davies

Still in England's second tier, the best young player around must be Luton's athletic central defender Curtis Davies, potentially a new Rio Ferdinand, though, hopefully, less accident-prone. It will be fascinating to see what happens at the start of December when Luton go to Reading and Davies is confronted by Leroy Lita, the Congo-born striker similarly tipped for a bright future.

Out in the cold...Hofmann

Sad tale of Hofmann

RAPID WIEN MIDFIELDER Steffen Hofmann is stuck. Unwanted by the German national team, the 23-year-old former Bayern Munich junior had hoped to play for Austria instead. National coach Hans Krankl had hoped to see him shoring up his midfield as well. However, after Hofmann filled in all the necessary paperwork to obtain Austrian citizenship, FIFA turned down his application to play for his new country.

The Austrian federation believed Hofmann could take advantage of the window of opportunity FIFA opened last year for "country jumpers". That, however, applied only to young players and for a short space of time. Now, unfortunately for Hofmann, the window is shut and he is on the outside looking in.

Ailton acts up

Besiktas have just found out why Schalke did not try too hard to hang on to Brazilian top scorer Ailton. The Turkish side claimed a transfer coup when they lured the 32-year-old striker from the Bundesliga runners-up. But then Ailton flew home to Brazil after pre-season training and failed to return in time for the start of the Turkish League campaign. First, Besiktas received a message that he had been delayed by a sponsor's party, then another claiming a problem with flight tickets, then a third saying his daughter was unwell. Ailton was fined and suspended in his absence. "I'm not surprised," said Schalke coach Ralf Rangnick. "Still, that's not our problem any more."

Thumbs up...new Hearts manager George Burley is making an impact

Hearts' warming story

LILLE, THE FRENCH League runners-up last season, and Everton, who finished fourth in the Premiership, provided proof that teams from outside the so-called elite in any one country can battle their way into the Champions League reckoning. And there is even better news for the game's health from Norway and Scotland, countries where one or two clubs have held a virtual stranglehold on entry to Europe's top competition.

Rosenborg's reign is over in Norway. The champions for the past 13 years are still shipping water in mid-table while Start and Valerenga battle for supremacy. Meanwhile, Hearts are launching what may prove a real challenge to Rangers and Celtic's 20-year duopoly in Scotland.

Mention of the name Romanov is usually in the context of an out-of-touch regime ripe for overthrow. But in Hearts' case, it's the other way around. Vladimir Romanov is a Lithuanian businessman presenting himself as a sort of mini-Abramovich. Having taken home country side Kaunas as far as he could, he determined to buy his way into Scottish football.

Dundee United's Eddie Thompson turned down Romanov's bid for a stake at Tannadice, so Romanov turned his attention to Hearts, brought in George Burley as manager and financed a small-scale spending spree. Three Czechs, various Lithuanians, a French midfielder who did not make the grade at Internazionale and Greece's Euro 2004-winning defender Takis Fissas will not scare the likes of Milan, Barcelona and Chelsea, but the longer they scare the Old Firm is good news for Scottish football.

Early results were more than promising with Hearts top of the table, albeit after only three games.

Burley knows the business; his recent spell at Derby, whom he took to the Championship play-offs last term, was a fine example of how to make bricks with very little straw. He is also his own man. As he says of his relationship with Romanov: "We don't always agree but when we do we bring in players. He pays but I'm the one who builds the side."

One further note on the shifting state of play in Scotland: did you notice how the "Old Firm for the Premiership" front went all quiet after Celtic's upset by Artmedia Bratislava? Oddly, in the short term at any rate, that was good news for Rangers fans. David Murray International, which owns a major share in the Light Blues, will have to pay previous owners ENIC a significant "bonus" if ever the Old Firm transfer their competitive allegiance to English football. Celtic's early Champions League exit has, one assumes, pushed that pay day back a while.

Figo makes the A list at last

LUIS FIGO FINALLY got his wish when he joined Inter from Real Madrid. He had been kept waiting a decade for the chance to play in Serie A. Back in 1994, when Figo first made waves for Sporting Lisbon, Italian clubs called so persistently that the World Youth Cup-winner managed the not-so-clever trick of signing simultaneously for both Juventus and Parma. Everyone objected to everyone else's involvement and FIFA banned Figo from joining any Italian club for two years.

Since Sporting had already spent the transfer fee, they had no option but to sell Figo anyway, and Barcelona stepped in. The rest is history – success and the captaincy at Camp Nou, then the "treachery" of his transfer to Real Madrid as the first galactico. Now, after a better season than most Bernabeu team-mates, he has gone. Vanderlei Luxemburgo's decision? Or wasn't Figo shifting enough shirts?

Lucky seven?...Figo at Inter

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Then there were three

Juve, Milan and Inter are the only real title contenders, says Paddy Agnew

Hello, Inter…the arrival of defender Walter Samuel could prove crucial for Roberto Mancini's side

IF THE OFF-FIELD shenanigans that marred this summer (see Dispatches, page 16) are by now par for the course in Italy, then the Serie A title contest also has a "business as usual" look about it. There are only three realistic title contenders – defending champions Juventus, Milan and Internazionale.

The days are long gone when, at this time of year, we would be analysing the prospects of the "Seven Sisters", the country's seven strongest teams. It says much about the current state of the game in Italy that the other four "sisters" – Roma, Fiorentina, Lazio and Parma – have all dropped out of title contention in the wake of financial problems that came close to threatening their very survival.

As for the Big Three, they are currently hard to separate. All are financially sound, all have strengthened their squads over the summer and all have looked sharp and ready during pre-season friendlies.

Psychologically, however, "Old Lady" Juventus start with an advantage. Not only are they the reigning champions but also both Milanese sides have major points to prove. Milan have to prove they can get their act together after the greatest act of footballing hara-kiri of the modern era in that Champions League Final loss to Liverpool in Istanbul.

Mancini honeymoon over

Inter, too, have to stand up and finally deliver, leaving behind them last season's embarrassing statistic of having drawn 18 of their 38 League games. For coach Roberto Mancini, in his second season at the club, the honeymoon period is over.

It is at least arguable that Juventus pulled off the best signing of the summer when landing Arsenal's Patrick Vieira for £14million. His overall performance during Juve's 2-1 loss to Milan in the clubs' traditional August "Berlusconi Trophy" friendly suggests the Old Lady are stronger than ever. Players like Romanian striker Adrian Mutu and left-back Giorgio Chiellini could also make significant contributions to the Juventus cause, although two of the club's most famous names, Alessandro Del Piero and Czech Pavel Nedved, may struggle.

While Juventus have Vieira, Milan have £16million striker Alberto Gilardino (from Parma), for two years the most sought-after Italian on the market. They also picked up Christian Vieri from neighbours Inter. With Ukraine bullet Andrii Shevchenko and Brazilian Kaka also there to lead the front line, Milan look very strong in attack but their ageing defence could perhaps do with fresh blood.

Inter have also pulled off a big-name transfer coup with the purchase of Portugal's Luis Figo

FIVE TO WATCH

1 Stefano Fiore
(Fiorentina)
After a frustrating, largely unsuccessful season with Valencia, 30-year-old Fiore will not lack motivation as he attempts both to re-establish his Serie A reputation and reclaim a place in Marcello Lippi's World Cup squad. Best used as a left-sided midfielder, he has the class to make a big impact at Fiorentina.

2 Stephen Makinwa
(Palermo)
The 22-year-old steps into the big time with his move to ambitious, UEFA-Cup qualified Palermo. Scorer of 12 goals last season (six for Genoa in Serie B and six for Atalanta in A), the Nigerian has always looked a striker of immense potential, combining pace, power and technique (see Talent Scout, page 76).

3 Andrea Pisanu
(Parma)
One of the revelations of the second-choice Parma "youth" team that reached the semi-finals of the UEFA Cup last season. The 23-year-old, best used as an attacking right-back or right-sided midfielder, looks sure to make a first-team place his own this season.

4 David Pizarro
(Internazionale)
Arguably the best playmaker in Serie A for the past three seasons, and the diminutive left-footer has finally made the move from Udinese to one of the Big Three. The Inter midfield can surely only benefit from the Chilean's almost flawless control and passing ability.

5 Rodrigo Taddei
(Roma)
The 25-year-old Brazilian missed out on more than half of last season because of a dispute with Siena. But his move to Roma gives him a terrific opportunity to refloat his career and fulfil the potential he showed two seasons ago with the Tuscan club. Usually most effective on the right side of midfield.

from Real Madrid. It remains to be seen how much petrol is left in the Figo tank and it is arguable that another player bought from Real, Argentinian defender Walter Samuel, could prove more important for Inter.

As for the rest, Roma could yet surprise us. With a new coach, Luciano Spalletti, and new players such as Ghana's Sammy Kuffour, Brazilian Rodrigo Taddei and Congolese striker Shabani Nonda joining a squad that already contains Francesco Totti, Cristian Chivu, Mancini and Vincenzo Montella, they have huge potential. Much depends on how and if Spalletti manages to impose his will.

Elsewhere, Fiorentina, Palermo, Sampdoria and Udinese are obvious candidates for UEFA Cup places, while all the rest, Lazio included, may find themselves too close to the relegation zone for comfort for much of the season.

ITALY team by team

Ascoli
Coach: Marco Giampaolo
Key arrivals: none
Key departures: Antonelli (Chievo)
Prediction: Relegation will be hard to avoid given that Ascoli had not planned for Serie A – they were enrolled only at the last minute in lieu of Genoa and Torino.

Cagliari
Coach: Attilio Tesser
Key arrivals: Campagnolo (Triestina), Cannini (Sambenedettese), Cossu (Verona), Panedo (UAE)
Key departures: Alvarez (Nacional), Brambilla (Mantova), Iezzo (Napoli), Maltagliati (Spezia), Zola (retired)
Prediction: Without Gianfranco Zola but with a front line of Mauro Esposito, David Suazo and Antonio Langella still in place, Cagliari should at least equal last season's 10th-place finish.

Chievo
Coach: Giuseppe Pillon
Key arrivals: Antonelli (Ascoli), Brighi (Roma), Fontana (Inter), Obina (Enyimba), Oloruieche (Reggiana)
Key departures: Baronio (Lazio), Bucchi (Modena), Fusani (Perugia), Julio Cesar (Inter), Potenza (Mallorca)
Prediction: Debutant Serie A coach Pillon will struggle to keep this little-changed side afloat.

Empoli
Coach: Mario Somma
Key arrivals: Ascoli (Catanzaro), Berti (Torino), Novello (Lodigani), Pozzi (Milan), Serafini (Siena)
Key departures: Dedic (Parma), Foggia (Milan), Nomvete (Udinese), Saudati (Atalanta)
Prediction: Empoli, unlike the other two new boys, Ascoli and Treviso, have had all summer to prepare for Serie A and may well stay up.

Fiorentina
Coach: Cesare Prandelli
Key arrivals: Brocchi (Milan), Fiore (Valencia), Frey (Parma), Gamberini (Bologna), Pancaro (Milan), Pasqual (Arezzo), Toni (Palermo), Vryzas (Celta Vigo)
Key departures: Ariatti (Atalanta), Chiellini (Juventus), Lupatelli (Parma), Maresca (Juventus), Miccoli (Juventus), Obodo (Udinese)
Prediction: With one of Italy's most talented coaches at the helm, the club can avoid a repetition of last term's late escape from relegation.

Internazionale
Coach: Roberto Mancini
Key arrivals: Figo (Real Madrid), Julio Cesar (Chievo), Morfeo (Parma), Pizarro (Udinese), Samuel (Real Madrid), Solari (Real Madrid), Wome (Brescia)
Key departures: Dalmat (Racing Santander), Davids (Tottenham), Emre (Newcastle), Pasquale (Parma), Sorondo (Charlton), Vieri (Milan)
Prediction: A reinforced Inter are sure to be serious contenders in both Serie A and the Champions League. Defender Walter Samuel and playmaker David Pizarro could prove more influential additions than Luis Figo.

Juventus
Coach: Fabio Capello
Key arrivals: Chiellini (Fiorentina), Giannichedda (Lazio), Kovac (Bayern Munich), Vieira (Arsenal)
Key departures: Appiah (Fenerbahce), Kapo (Monaco), Maresca (Sevilla), Montero (San Lorenzo), Tacchinardi (Villarreal)
Prediction: Patrick Vieira represents the only significant change from last season but with him in the team, the champions look stronger than ever.

Lazio
Coach: Delio Rossi
Key arrivals: Baronio (Chievo), Behrami (Genoa), Belleri (Udinese), Cribari (Udinese), Firmani (Catania), Inzaghi (Sampdoria), Tare (Bologna)
Key departures: Bazzani (Sampdoria), A Filippini (Palermo), E Filippini (Palermo), Giannichedda (Juventus), Seric (Verona), Talamonti (River Plate)
Prediction: A UEFA Cup finish would be a big result for a Lazio team that is light years away from the title winners of five seasons ago.

Lecce
Coach: Angelo Gregucci
Key arrivals: Benussi (Venezia), Camorani (Fiorentina), Pecorari (Triestina), Polenghi (Novara)
Key departures: Bjelanovic (Genoa), Cirillo (AEK Athens), Dalla Bona (Sampdoria)
Prediction: Without attack-minded coach Zdenek Zeman, Lecce will be less entertaining but should stay up.

Livorno
Coach: Roberto Donadoni
Key arrivals: Colucci (Reggina), Cordova (Bari), Ginestra (Vis Pesaro), Morrone (Palermo), Palladino (Juventus), Ze Rodolpho (Juventude)
Key departures: Colombo (Atalanta), Osei (Poli Timisoara), Protti (retired), Vidigal (Udinese), Vigiani (Reggina)
Prediction: A repetition of last season's eighth-place finish seems unlikely. May struggle to stay up.

Messina
Coach: Bortolo Mutti
Key arrivals: Caglioni (Atalanta), De Sousa (Lodigiani), Gazzoli (Genoa), Sculli (Brescia)
Key departures: Eleftheropoulos (Milan), Parisi (Genoa)
Prediction: Having battled through courts all summer for the right to stay in Serie A, Messina are unlikely to relinquish that right on the pitch.

Milan
Coach: Carlo Ancelotti
Key arrivals: Eleftheropoulos (Messina), Gilardino (Parma), Jankulovski (Udinese), Vieri (Inter), Vogel (PSV)
Key departures: Abbiati (Genoa), Boriello (Sampdoria), Brocchi (Fiorentina), Crespo (Chelsea), Dhorasoo (PSG), Pancaro (Fiorentina), Tomasson (Stuttgart)
Prediction: The addition of Alberto Gilardino and Christian Vieri means Milan look stronger than ever in attack. However, their defence could do with some fresh blood. Another big season in prospect.

Palermo
Coach: Gigi Del Neri
Key arrivals: Bonanni (Roma), Caracciolo (Brescia), Makinwa (Atalanta), Modesto (Ascoli), Virga (Roma)
Key departures: Morrone (Livorno), Possanzini (Brescia), Toni (Fiorentina), Zauli (Sampdoria)
Prediction: With a new coach in Del Neri and a new front line of Andrea Caracciolo and Stephen Makinwa, Palermo could again fly high. Another UEFA Cup spot is on the cards.

Big buy...Milan's Gilardino

Parma
Coach: Mario Beretta
Key arrivals: Corradi (Valencia), Dedic (Empoli), Lupatelli (Fiorentina), Pasquale (Inter), Siviglia (Lazio)
Key departures: Bovo (Roma), Gilardino (Milan), Morfeo (Inter), Ruopolo (Lokomotiv Moscow), Sorrentino (Catanzaro)
Prediction: The takeover by former Real Madrid president Lorenzo Sanz could prove a useful stimulus. Parma should do better than last season, when they survived only by beating Bologna in a relegation play-off.

Reggina
Coach: Walter Mazzari
Key arrivals: Dionigi (Bari), Lejsal (Venezia), Pelizzoli (Roma), Vigiani (Livorno)
Key departures: Bonazzoli (Sampdoria), Boriello (Sampdoria), Esteves (Vicenza), Morabito (Cesena), Nakamura (Celtic), Veron (Lanus), Zamboni (Sampdoria)
Prediction: The little-changed side should be good enough to stay up, but expect another relegation battle.

Roma
Coach: Luciano Spalletti
Key arrivals: Bovo (Parma), Kuffour (Bayern Munich), Nonda (Monaco), Taddei (Siena), Tulli (Triestina)
Key departures: Pelizzoli (Reggina), Virga (Palermo)
Prediction: Although Antonio Cassano looked set to leave before the transfer window shut, Roma do have a new coach and should do better than last season (not difficult). Could have a good UEFA Cup run.

Sampdoria
Coach: Walter Novellino
Key arrivals: Bazzani (Lazio), Borriello (Milan), Castellazzi (Brescia), Foti (Venezia), Dalla Bona (Lecce), Sala (Atalanta), Zauli (Palermo)
Key departures: Inzaghi (Lazio), Rossini (Atalanta), Sacchetti (Mantova), Turci (Cesena)
Prediction: Another little-changed side who should have a comfortable season and could also go well in the UEFA Cup.

Bari to Reggina...Dionigi

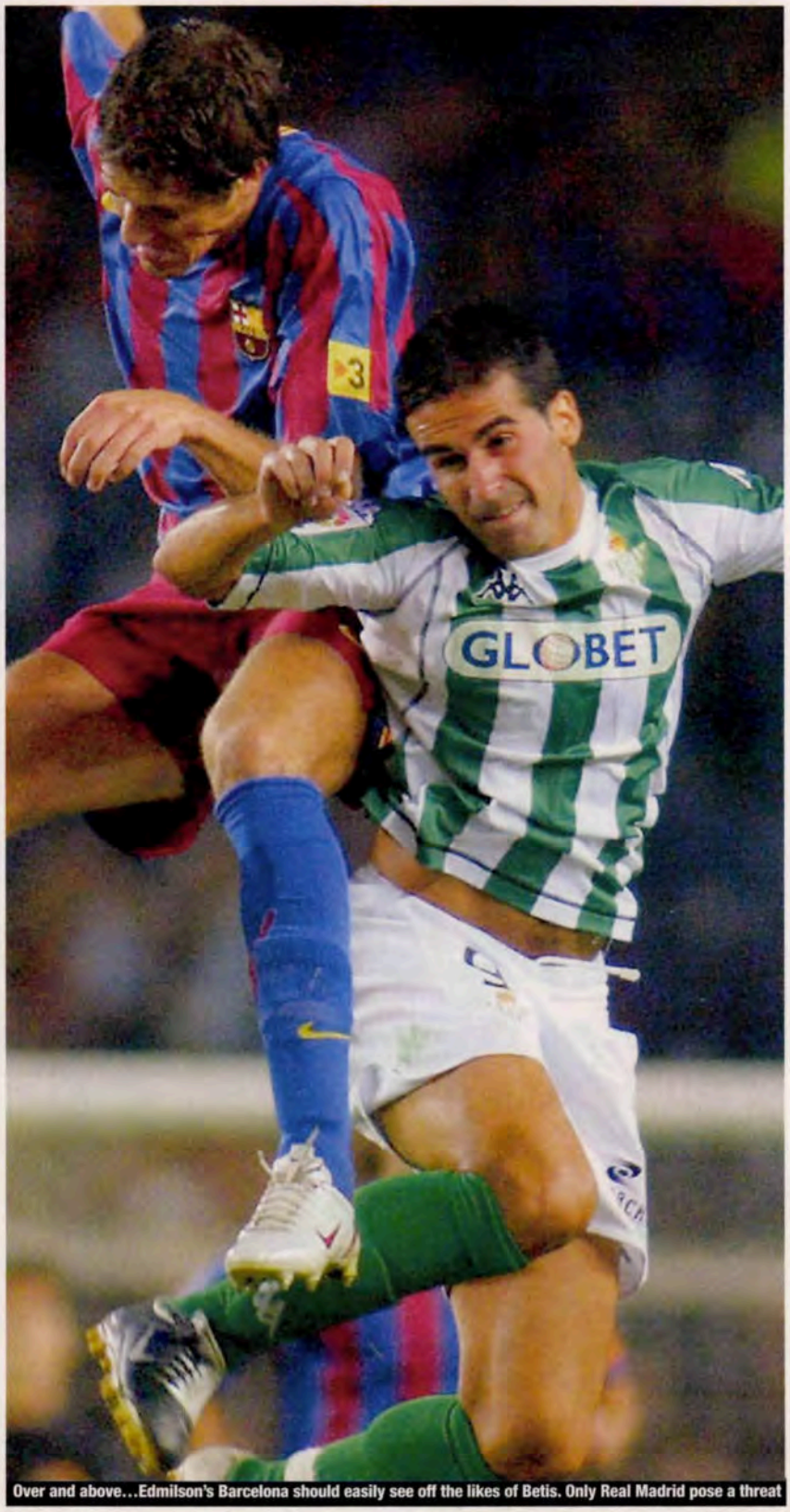
Siena
Coach: Gigi De Canio
Key arrivals: Bogdani (Reggina), Locatelli (Bologna), Mirante (Juventus), Negro (Lazio), Paro (Juventus), Serafini (Catania)
Key departures: Argilli (Modena), Manninger (Salzburg), Menegazzo (Bordeaux), Pasquale (Parma), Pecchia (Bologna), Taddei (Roma), Tudor (Juventus)
Prediction: Siena's relegation battle begins on day one and is likely to go right down to the wire. Staying up again this season would be a big result.

Treviso
Coach: Ezio Rossi
Key arrivals: Lorenzi (Atalanta), Pinga (Torino)
Key departures: none
Prediction: Like Ascoli, they will be penalised by their late entry into the Serie A ranks but could still prove good enough to avoid the drop.

Udinese
Coach: Serse Cosmi
Key arrivals: Candela (Bolton), Juarez (Bologna), Motta (Atalanta), Natali (Atalanta), Obodo (Perugia), Vidigal (Livorno)
Key departures: Belleri (Lazio), Cribari (Lazio), Handanovic (Treviso), Jankulovski (Milan), Kroldrup (Everton), Pizarro (Inter)
Prediction: Coach Cosmi has done well wherever he goes but there are doubts about whether the Udinese squad has the depth to compete in both Serie A and the Champions League. Securing a UEFA Cup spot would be a good result.

One from two

Nobody else is likely to challenge Barcelona and Real Madrid, says Sid Lowe



Over and above...Edmilson's Barcelona should easily see off the likes of Betis. Only Real Madrid pose a threat

IS IT REALLY the end of an era? Are Real Madrid the victims of galacticide? And has power shifted from Castile to Catalonia after six trophy-less years at Camp Nou? Last season suggested so; this season should go some way to confirming, or destroying, the bold predictions of sweeping change made as Barca won the title in record-breaking style back in May.

For Madrid, two seasons without a trophy, the first time that has happened for 12 years, is too long; for Barca, six seasons without one, a run finally brought to an end, was an eternity.

Both clubs' preparations for this season reflect that. Barca have consolidated their squad but added little to their starting team, confident that they have what it takes to retain the League title. Madrid have bought and bought big, with Robinho and Julio Baptista leading the way. For once, they have bought young, too. The galactico model has been shaken up, and the first of the gleaming superstars shipped out.

But all the talk of Madrid and Barca actually underlines that some things never change. Barca are back and the Big Two look set to dominate. Sadly, the sustained challenge of Deportivo La Coruna looks at an end after the departure of Javier Irureta, the club's most successful coach. Valencia were a pale shadow of their title-wining side last season, and look likely to fall short again, despite the hiring of new coach Quique Sanchez Flores. Real Sociedad, who pushed Madrid all the way two years ago, do not look like repeating that feat.

In fact, it may be Villarreal who have the best chance to challenge the Big Two, especially now that Juan Roman Riquelme has signed permanently from Barcelona. He will once again be at the heart of everything Villarreal do with his wonderful vision.

Likely also-rans

Down in Seville, Sevilla have lost their best player (Baptista), while Betis's squad, for all its slick counter-attacking football, looks rather slim.

Atletico Madrid, who have been as voracious as ever in the transfer market, are the only other side with the capacity to break up the old order. As usual, they have a new coach. As usual, fans, players and the press are banging on about how this could be their year – but even they will be thinking more about a top-four place than a title race.

At the other end, promoted sides Alaves, Cadiz and Celta Vigo all have something – even if it is only a feeling – that allows their fans to dream of survival.

At Alaves, most eyes will be on controversial Ukrainian-American president Dimitri Piterman. Previously the owner of Racing Santander, Piterman has already sacked Rafael Montfort and re-appointed last season's coach, Chuichi Cos.

Celta's coach, Fernando Vazquez, is fast becoming La Liga's classic yo-yo manager, a Spanish Dave Bassett. In the past five seasons, he has won promotion twice and suffered relegation three times.

Cadiz are one of Spain's best-loved sides, and have proved it by selling 20,000 season tickets.

FIVE TO WATCH

1 Julio Baptista
(Real Madrid)
Barcelona expected the Brazilian midfielder-turned-striker to move to Camp Nou next summer, only to see him pitch up at rivals Real Madrid. The Beast looks a terrifying prospect for rival defences, especially if Madrid finally team him with Ronaldo.

2 Mark Van Bommel
(Barcelona)
A hugely influential midfielder for PSV but he faces a challenge to win a starting place in the Barca line-up, which barely changed from week to week when winning the title last season.

3 Ruben
(Deportivo La Coruna)
The once-chubby striker came to prominence after scoring an outrageous goal for Las Palmas against Real Madrid and he could really come of age in La Coruna under new manager Joaquin Caparros.

4 Mateja Kezman
(Atletico Madrid)
After a frustrating 12 months at Chelsea, the former PSV striker is looking to rebuild his career in La Liga with an Atletico side that has plenty of attacking options after another summer of changes.

5 David Villa
(Valencia)
The Asturian (left in picture) scored 32 goals in the past two seasons for Zaragoza and he could be the star for new club Valencia, who are showing signs of revival under new coach Quique Sanchez Flores.

SPAIN team by team

Alaves
Coach: Chuichi Cos
Key arrivals: Aloisi (Osasuna), Jandro (Celta), Pellegrino (Liverpool)
Key departures: Juan Pablo (Numancia)
Prediction: The promoted club already boasted highly capable striker Bodipo, tough guy Oscar Tellez, Roberto Bonano in goal and Quique de Lucas on the right. They have now bought a whole raft of players, and should survive.

Athletic Bilbao
Coach: Jose Luis Mendilibar
Key arrivals: Exposito (Osasuna)
Key departures: Del Horno (Chelsea), Ezquerro (Barcelona)
Prediction: Athletic will miss Santi Ezquerro and the attacking thrust of Asier Del Horno, so much will again depend on the creativity of Fran Yeste. Constrained by their Basque-only policy, Athletic have made a solitary new signing (Unai Exposito), while Ernesto Valverde, who had coached many of the players since they were kids, has departed. Will new man Mendilibar be able to command the same respect?

Atletico Madrid
Coach: Carlos Bianchi
Key arrivals: Gabi (Getafe), Galletti (Zaragoza), Kezman (Chelsea), Maxi Rodriguez (Espanyol), Petrov (Wolfsburg)
Key departures: Contra (Getafe), Gronkjaer (Stuttgart), Javi Moreno (Cordoba), Paunovic (Getafe), Sosa (Osasuna)
Prediction: Atletico have again bought and sold by the bucket-load. They have the best centre-back pairing in Spain, with Pablo and Perea, and have added attacking threat (Maxi Rodriguez, Mateja Kezman), removing some of the burden from Fernando Torres. They still lack a creative central midfielder, though Gabi's return from Getafe promises much.

Barcelona
Coach: Frank Rijkaard
Key arrivals: Ezquerro (Athletic Bilbao), Van Bommel (PSV)
Key departures: Rustu (Fenerbahce), Saviola (Sevilla)
Prediction: Barcelona are still to make a big-name signing, with president Joan Laporta and coach Rijkaard both insisting they are satisfied with the squad. Barca's aim this summer has been to add depth rather than stars. They have effectively got six new players with the return from long-term injury of Thiago Motta, Henrik Larsson, Edmilson and Gabri. They still look rather thin at the back and can lack width.

Betis
Coach: Llorenc Serra Ferrer
Key arrivals: Ito (Espanyol), Juanlu (Numancia), Miguel Angel (Malaga), Xisco (Valencia)
Key departures: Benjamin (Cadiz)
Prediction: There have been few signings, but Betis's summer success was all about keeping blue-eyed boy Joaquin. With the right-winger still on board, Betis's fluent, rapid counter-attacking football could make a real impact in Europe.

Cadiz
Coach: Vitor Esparrago
Key arrivals: Benjamin (Betis), Berizzo (Celta), Ivan Ania (Nastic), Mario Silva (Recreativo)
Key departures: none
Prediction: Cadiz are back in the top flight after 12 years and while they might be expected to struggle, have great spirit. Cadiz also have an intelligent manager in Uruguayan Esparrago and have brought in several experienced players at little cost. Midfielder Jonathan Sesma, last season's top scorer, will be vital.

Celta Vigo
Coach: Fernando Vazquez
Key arrivals: Esteban (Sevilla), Fernando Baiano (Malaga) Javi Guerrero (Racing), Jorge Larena (Atletico), Placente (Leverkusen)
Key departures: Jandro (Alaves)
Prediction: Despite losing star man Jandro, Celta have bought intelligently and cheaply. There are great expectations of youth-team midfielder Borja Oubina, and Celta should survive semi-comfortably – something of a novelty for their coach. Don't expect heroics, though.

Deportivo La Coruna
Coach: Joaquin Caparros
Key arrivals: De Guzman (Hannover) Juanma (Racing)
Key departures: Fran, Mauro Silva (retired), Pandiani (Birmingham)
Prediction: A new era in Depor's centenary year, with new coach Caparros bringing an entirely different approach to predecessor Javier Irureta. His Sevilla side were the toughest, most competitive team in Spain. The early signs for Depor look positive.

Espanyol
Coach: Miguel-Angel Lotina
Key arrivals: Costa (Marseille), Ito (Betis), Riera (Bordeaux), Zabaleta (San Lorenzo)
Key departures: Ibarra (Boca Juniors), Maxi Rodriguez (Atletico)
Prediction: Having surprisingly steered Espanyol into the top five for the first time in 10 years last season, the clever, cautious Basque Lotina was hoping for this to be a season of consolidation. But while there have been some decent signings, the summer has been frustrating. The chase for Javier Saviola was in vain, while last season's top scorer, Maxi Rodriguez, joined Atletico. Unlikely to repeat their fifth-place finish.

Getafe
Coach: Bernd Schuster
Key arrivals: Contra (Atletico), Guiza (Murcia), Matellan (Boca Juniors)
Key departures: Gabi (Atletico), Nano (Betis)
Prediction: Having surprised everyone by finishing 13th in their first top division season last term, Getafe's aim will again be survival. Thirteen players have departed, with 10 coming in, including striker Daniel Guiza (21 goals for struggling Second Division Murcia last season). New coach Schuster has two players per position, but getting so many new faces to gel will be a huge challenge.

New perch...Valencia's Kluivert

Malaga
Coach: Antonio Tapia
Key arrivals: Counaga (Ipswich), Morales (Osasuna), Salva (Valencia)
Key departures: Fernando Baiano (Celta)
Prediction: Despite losing striker Fernando Baiano, Malaga's aim will be to fight for a European spot. They will be tough at the back, while the new men leading the attack, Salva Ballesta and Richard Morales, are both battering-ram strikers. It won't be pretty, but it will be effective.

Mallorca
Coach: Hector Cuper
Key arrivals: Borja (Real Madrid), Olembe (Marseille), Peralta (Talleres), Potenza (Internazionale)
Key departures: Nadal (retired), Westerveld (Portsmouth)
Prediction: All change following their final-day relegation escape last season. Fourteen players have departed, replaced by nine new (and very cheap) faces. Of those arrivals, Borja Fernandez will anchor the midfield, but his new club may well struggle again.

Osasuna
Coach: Javier Aguirre
Key arrivals: Ricardo (Man Utd), Romeo (Hamburg)
Key departures: Aloisi (Alaves), Exposito (Athletic), Morales (Malaga), Pablo Garcia (Real Madrid)
Prediction: Thirteen years on, Osasuna return to Europe (as Spanish Cup runners-up) – and it could cost them. The club have lost arguably their two best players in the summer: Pablo Garcia, the heart of the side, and Unai Exposito. Aguirre – the top flight's longest-serving coach – has sought to resolve the goalkeeping crisis by signing Ricardo, but Osasuna look set to struggle.

Dream maker...Sevilla's Saviola

Racing Santander
Coach: Manuel Preciados
Key arrivals: Dalmat (Internazionale), Serrano (Espanyol)
Key departures: Benayoun (West Ham), Javi Guerrero (Celta), Juanma (Deportivo), Regueiro (Valencia)
Prediction: Preciados returns to his hometown club for a second spell in charge and he faces an uphill task. Sixteenth last season, Racing have lost 13 players – including playmaker and top scorer Yossi Benayoun. They've made a handful of interesting signings, including Stephane Dalmat, but a very hard season awaits.

Real Madrid
Coach: Vanderlei Luxemburgo
Key arrivals: Diogo (River Plate), Julio Baptista (Sevilla), Pablo Garcia (Osasuna), Robinho (Santos)
Key departures: Borja (Mallorca), Figo (Internazionale), Samuel (Internazionale), Solari (Internazionale)
Prediction: Two seasons without a trophy is too long for the self-proclaimed greatest team in the world. That's why, this year, at last, things have changed. Luis Figo, the first of the galacticos, has departed, and Madrid have done the unthinkable and bought some non-superstars. Chief among them is hatchet-man Pablo Garcia. Madrid still look a little light at the back, however.

Real Sociedad
Coach: Jose Maria Amorrortu
Key arrivals: Cifuentes (Eibar), Garitano (Eibar)
Key departures: Alkiza (retired), Karpin (retired)
Prediction: Optimism is in short supply after last season's 14th-place finish. Only right-back Daniel

SPAIN team by team

Cifuentes and defensive midfielder Gaizka Garitano have been brought in, both from Second Division Eibar. Meanwhile, Valery Karpin has finally retired at the age of 36. The good news is that top scorer Nihat Kahveci will stay for another season at least.

Sevilla

Coach: Juande Ramos
Key arrivals: Kanoute (Tottenham), Luis Fabiano (Porto), Saviola (Barcelona)
Key departures: Julio Baptista (Real Madrid)
Prediction: Not so very long ago, it was all doom and gloom. Betis had pipped Sevilla to a Champions League place, coach Joaquin Caparros had walked and Julio Baptista had joined Real Madrid. But Sevilla president Jose Maria del Nido has so far warded off Real Madrid's advances for centre-back Sergio Ramos, while Javier Saviola has arrived to get the fans dreaming again. However, it is doubtful that former Betis boss Ramos can repeat the feats of the past couple of years.

Valencia

Coach: Quique Sanchez Flores
Key arrivals: Edu (Arsenal), Kluivert (Newcastle), Regueiro (Racing), Villa (Zaragoza)
Key departures: Corradi (Parma), Fiore (Fiorentina), Sissoko (Liverpool), Xisco (Betis)
Prediction: There is optimism at Mestalla despite a desperately poor pre-season. New coach Sanchez Flores is young and hungry for success and fits the Rafa Benitez mould. He also has an excellent squad at his disposal: the 2004 title-winning team have been complimented by the arrivals of Edu (though now injured, and out for six months), Patrick Kluivert, David Villa and Mario Regueiro. More is also expected from Italian striker Marco Di Vaio.

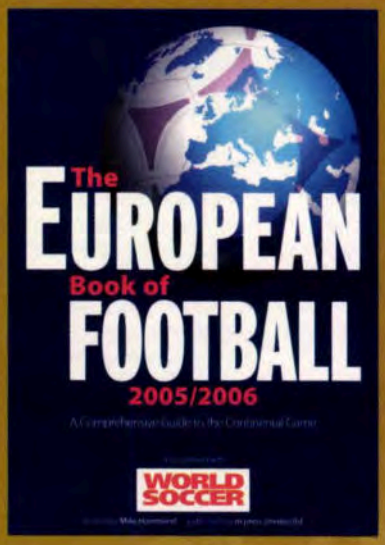
Villarreal

Coach: Manuel Pellegrini
Key arrivals: Barbosa (Banfield), Kromkamp (AZ), Tacchinardi (Juventus)
Key departures: Reina (Liverpool)
Prediction: Villarreal were last season's great revelations and played flowing, creative football. The departure of keeper Jose Reina is a blow, but that apart it's been a summer of relative stability and consolidation. Spain's top scorer Diego Forlan decided to stay and the really, really big news was Villarreal's ability to secure the permanent services of playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme.

Zaragoza

Coach: Victor Munoz
Key arrivals: Cesar (Real Madrid), Ewerthon (Dortmund), Sergio Garcia (Levante)
Key departures: Villa (Valencia)
Prediction: Gabriel Milito, who looked set to join Liverpool, has decided to stay, and will be backed by new signing Cesar Sanchez, who finally provides security in goal. With two Brazilian wingers – Savio and new signing Ewerthon – Zaragoza are not short on creativity. But they have lost David Villa, the sole focus of their attacking play; his replacement, Sergio Garcia, has yet to convince.

Headed for Celta…Fernando Baiano



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Ballack views his options

GERMANY

TWO BURNING QUESTIONS are preoccupying the German nation at the moment. Who will be their Chancellor after the forthcoming federal elections and will Michael Ballack be a Bayern Munich player beyond next summer, when his current contract expires?

Ballack insists he will be wearing the red of Bayern all this season. But it might well be a case of so far and no further. Talks on a new deal have barely got off the ground and not surprisingly Ballack's agent, Dr Michael Becker, is anxious to make the most of this dream negotiating position, advising his client to keep his options open and up the ante.

Becker wants to see what goodies Europe's top clubs are willing to put on the table and then compare them to the terms of the four-year extension Bayern are proposing (thought to be an annual salary of £4.6million).

"Bayern took a long time to make us an offer," said Becker. "So it's now legitimate for us to look around and see if this offer fits the market value."

Becker also denied claims in the English media that Ballack had concluded a gentleman's agreement to join Manchester United next summer on a free transfer.

Bayern, never a club known for their injudicious financial dealings, think they have gone as far as they can to hold on to Ballack, offering a 65 per cent pay increase and promising him a total package of £28.5m (wages plus lump-sum payments). "We've reached our pain threshold, we've moved heaven and earth," said chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge. "We'll have to see if it proves enough. I think we have a more than fair chance of Michael being with us after next year."

But not everyone at Bayern is so relaxed. Honorary club president Franz Beckenbauer fears the club are being held to ransom – "We're a football team, not a bank" – while coach Felix Magath is apparently not happy with Ballack's waiting game. "Should Ballack not renew with us, we need to take action," said Magath. "We need his decision soon, not next year."

As Ballack sets off on what could be his final Bundesliga season, another high-class midfielder, Dutchman Rafael Van der Vaart, seems to be adjusting well to the German game following his £3.7m move to Hamburg from Ajax. Many Dutch experts, including Johan Cruyff, had wondered why a youngster once linked to leading clubs in England and Spain had chosen to decamp to a German club that had not won a League title in over two decades. But you won't find any Hamburg fans complaining, having witnessed Van der Vaart's nimble inventiveness and brilliant free-kick goal in a 2-0 win at Arminia Bielefeld.

Nick Bidwell

End in sight?...this may be Ballack's last season at Bayern

Showing backbone...PSG's Kalou

PSG gel well

FRANCE

THE EARLY ROUNDS of Ligue 1 have brought differing fortunes for the country's footballing aristocrats, all of whom had stated ambitions of challenging for the title.

After a 2004-05 season that was nothing short of disastrous, Paris Saint-Germain powered out of the blocks with three straight victories to head the table. New signings Bonaventure Kalou, Vikash Dhorasoo and David Rozehnal have provided an entire new spine for Laurent Fournier's side, and no one can deny that it's PSG who've gelled the quickest.

Marseille, meanwhile, were up to their same old tricks, promising plenty pre-season before turning in two abject performances, against Bordeaux and Lens, both games lost 2-0. The notoriously tetchy Velodrome crowd looked to be running out of patience even at this early stage, and striker Peguy Luyindula was made the scapegoat for the poor start by being booted out of the club to join Auxerre on a year's loan.

However, a spirited 1-1 draw at home to champions Lyon – driven by a superb performance by midfielder Franck Ribery – has put some hope back into Marseille's season.

And what of Lyon? As the unseemly Michael Essien saga dragged on, Gerard Houllier's side remained focused and managed to post two wins before that draw against Marseille. New signing John Carew notched three goals, and with Essien finally on his way, no doubt we can expect even more focus from Lyon in the weeks and months ahead.

Howard Johnson

Ajax League start delayed

HOLLAND

AJAX AND DEN HAAG were forced to wait a week before kicking off the new League campaign after their scheduled meeting, in Amsterdam, was postponed until January following a bizarre saga.

The game should have been played on August 14, but could not go ahead at the Amsterdam Arena after city mayor Job Cohen said the police force were too overloaded with work to provide the necessary security. It was suggested Den Haag host the game instead, but this was ruled out as well after Wim Deetman, the mayor of The Hague, refused permission, this time because of the difficulty of gathering sufficient police officers at such short notice.

The Dutch FA then started looking into the possibility of playing the game behind closed doors at a neutral ground. But Ajax protested, taking the issue to court in an attempt to get the match back on home turf. The judge duly fixed the date of January 7 for the game to be played, in Amsterdam, leaving Ajax and Den Haag to cool their heels for a week.

Ajax had been allowed to host the Supercup a week before the scheduled League kick-off, and beat champions PSV 2-1. PSV stuttered again in their first League match, managing only a 1-1 draw on the artificial pitch of promoted Heracles Almelo. Heracles, meanwhile, were expelled from the national Cup, along with Second Division Den Bosch, after fielding suspended players in first round matches.

In transfer news, striker Pierre Van Hooijdonk has joined former club NAC Breda from Fenerbahce; AZ defender Jan Kromkamp is now at Villarreal; and Ajax have signed Besiktas' Spanish left-back Juanfran.

Sparta Rotterdam forward Rachid Bouaouzan has been given a six-month suspended sentence and ordered to do 240 hours' community service following his horrific tackle on Niels Kokmeijer of Go Ahead Eagles last December. The challenge ended Kokmeijer's career.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

Start, stop...Ajax hosted and won the Supercup against PSV but were not allowed to stage their scheduled opening League match against Den Haag a week later

PORTUGAL

Koeman quick to win cup

Ronald Koeman started his reign at Benfica with a trophy, leading the League champions to a 1-0 victory over Cup-holders Vitoria Setubal in the season-opening Supercup. Nuno Gomes scored with a fine strike early in the second half to answer those who had criticised his poor goal ratio last season.

The forward's performance earned rave reviews from Koeman, who must also have been smiling after contract rebel Miguel was finally sold to Valencia. The £5.4million received from the transfer should help the Dutchman bring in reinforcements. The former Ajax boss had stressed the need to bolster his attack with the signing of a creative midfielder and a striker, but attempts to buy Jon Dahl Tomasson and Salomon Kalou fell through.

Across Lisbon, Sporting have also been quiet in the transfer market, a sign of the current economic recession in domestic football. In fact, the Big Three clubs (Benfica, Sporting and FC Porto) did not spend £10m between them over the summer. Every year Portuguese clubs buy fewer players and sell more, the exception being the dozens of Brazilians acquired at no cost.

Pedro Pinto

AUSTRIA

Stoger no stooge

Austria Wien made a confident start to the season, winning five of their first six games to lead city rivals Rapid by two points. "We are playing the best football in the League and our strikers are scoring consistently. It's as easy as that," said Austria coach Peter Stoger.

The club's early successes

prompted owner Frank Stronach to give Stoger and assistant Frenkie Schinkels permanent deals, having initially appointed them only in a temporary capacity.

While the Viennese clubs were flying high, Salzburg, the League's biggest spenders, struggled. They took only seven points from their first six games, leaving coach Kurt Jara to say: "Building a team takes time."

Harry Miltner

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Cork stay on course

Cork City are on course for their first League title for 12 years after going six points clear of second-placed Derry City with 12 games remaining. Defending champions Shelbourne have been far too inconsistent to mount a title defence, despite having a huge squad. They recently added former Irish international defender Curtis Fleming to their ranks, from English fourth level side Darlington, until the end of the season.

Heavily-endebted Shamrock Rovers have been saved from going out of business after a group of supporters put in their own money to ease the financial crisis. Nevertheless, manager Roddy Collins has been forced to sell most of his best players, with Pat McCourt returning to hometown side Derry, Stephen Gough to Longford Town and Jason Gavin to Drogheda United.

Felix Healy has quit as manager of struggling Finn Harps, with Anthony Gorman taking over as player-manager.

Sean Creedon

LIECHTENSTEIN

New-look Vaduz go top

Vaduz were top of the Swiss Second Division after four games, on goal difference from Lausanne, having made a raft of new signings under new coach Mats Gren. Goran Antic, bought from Wil, is top scorer, with other new arrivals including Chilean international Alonzo Zuniga (from Deportes Concepcion), Julio Lopez (St Gallen), Michele Maggetti and Cameroonian Jean-Francois Bell (both Bellinzona), keeper Swen Konig (Aarau) and Sandro Burki (Wil).

Meanwhile, Switzerland-born Vaduz striker Beni Fischer has now qualified for Liechtenstein nationality and was included in Martin Andermatt's squad for the World Cup qualifier against Slovakia, a 0-0 draw.

International left-back Franz-Josef Vogt has joined Chur from Balzers.

Graeme Crawford

Basle endure bust-ups

Trouble with the boss...Christian Gimenez

SWITZERLAND

THERE HAS BEEN bad blood between Basle coach Christian Gross and the Argentinian contingent in his squad. Christian Gimenez, the League top scorer last season, was less than happy at being dropped twice – against Zurich in the League and the first leg against Werder Bremen in the Champions League qualifiers. But Gross justified his action, saying: "Gimenez and compatriot Julio Rossi have been flirting with foreign clubs for transfers, to the detriment of their commitment to Basle."

Then, during the Werder tie, the third Argentinian, Matias Delgado, was heard to call Gross "the son of a whore" in Spanish when he was substituted.

All three Argentinians were back in force for the League match at St Gallen, with Gimenez scoring twice. But Basle squandered a 3-1 lead to only draw 3-3.

Meanwhile, Basle captain Murat Yakin was publicly slated by vice-president Gigi Oeri for his capricious behaviour towards Koln. After passing his medical and even training with the newly-promoted Bundesliga side, Yakin said he realised he would be better off with Basle and decided not to join Koln after all. Oeri told a television interviewer that the defender's behaviour was not fitting for a captain.

Ivar von Rulach

Wins wipe away Westerlo tears

BELGIUM

WESTERLO, WHO SPENT the summer lamenting the departure of coach Jan Ceulemans to Club Brugge, appeared to have got over their grief by winning their first two League games under new boss Herman Helleputte. The victories – 2-0 at home to Cercle Brugge and 1-0 away to Germinal Beerschot – put the small provincial club joint top with Anderlecht and Standard Liege.

The much-travelled Helleputte signed up on a two-year deal having left Beveren at the end of last season.

Anderlecht's new Turkish signing, Serhat Akin, made an impressive start, scoring twice in the opening-day 6-0 thrashing of La Louviere and converting a penalty in the 2-0 win over Cercle Brugge next time out.

Standard kicked off with a 3-1 home victory over Lierse, but only won at promoted Zulte-Waregem, who had been leading 1-0, with goals from Mohammed Tchite and Michel Garbini in injury time. Two home fans, incensed by the amount of time added on by the referee, ran on to the pitch to remonstrate with the official.

FC Brussels kept a clean sheet for only the second time in the First Division when winning 2-0 on the opening day at Beveren, the scene of their previous success – by 1-0 – last season. Their latest clean sheet was all the more creditable since they were without five players who had not been registered in time with the FA.

Nicholas Harling

Quick off the mark...Anderlecht's Serhat Akin

Hansen out as Rosenborg slip further off the pace

NORWAY

Unhappy returns...Espen Johnsen blundered for two goals and was sent off as Rosenborg crashed at his old club Start

THE CONTINUED SLIDE down the table of perennial champions Rosenborg prompted coach Per Joar Hansen to resign "in order to save the team" and put a stop to the run of defeats that has effectively cost them their League crown. However, his successor, Per Mathias Hogmo, had a bad start as Rosenborg lost their third League match in a row, 5-2 at leaders Start, to fall 17 points adrift with eight games left.

The writing was on the wall for Hansen, who had taken over last October, following a humiliating 5-1 defeat at Fredrikstad at the start of August. A 2-1 loss at home to Lillestrom four days later was the final straw.

Hogmo coached Tromso last season and has also led Norway's Under-21 team and the national women's side. He is renowned for his systematic approach and meticulous attention to detail.

"Our first aim will be to survive in the elite division," Hogmo said. "We will have to tighten up the defensive aspect of our game and be more aggressive."

Rosenborg, who have won the championship for the past 13 seasons, lay just four points off the relegation play-off berth after their recent run of defeats.

The loss at Start was particularly humiliating for national team keeper Espen Johnsen, who blundered twice against his former club as Start roared into a 4-0 first-half lead and was then sent off for felling Todi Jonsson. The latter, Start's new signing from FC Copenhagen, hit a hat-trick to help keep his side in pole position.

Bottom club Tromso have promoted assistant coach Steinar Nilsen after parting company with Otto Ulseth.

Sigurd Odegaard

DENMARK

Viborg on the goal trail

Viborg were the surprise early League leaders with 13 points from five games thanks to the goals of Jose Mota Junior and Steffen Hojer, a summer buy from OB Odense. Viborg scored three in each of their first four games, all victories, before being held to a 1-1 draw at Silkeborg. They led on goal difference from champions Brondby, who also won their first four before a 0-0 draw at promoted Horsens.

One of Viborg's victims were AGF, who took only one point from their first five games, much to the chagrin of multi-millionaire owner Kurt Andersen. He has said he aims to make AGF the best club in Denmark and a consistent threat in Europe.

Jim Holden

FINLAND

Hodgson to take charge

Much-travelled English coach Roy Hodgson is to take charge of the national team from next summer. The 58-year-old, currently with Viking Stavanger in Norway, will take the reins in August; Jyrki Heliskoski, a veteran of the national team youth and Under-21 set-up, has been handed the reins until then. Previous boss Antti Muurinen was sacked after Finland lost 4-0 at home to Holland in a World Cup qualifier in June.

HJK Helsinki topped the League on goal difference from MyPa and were still unbeaten after 17 rounds. However, they have lost experienced Swedish central defender Joakim Jensen to Hammarby.

Haka, soundly beaten by Valerenga of Norway in the Champions League qualifiers, have signed young Angolan forward Igor Nascimento. He made an instant impact, scoring the only goal of his debut game, away to IFK Mariehamn.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Fram foil FH

Runaway League leaders FH blew their chance of doing the Double after losing a 2-0 lead in the Cup

semi-final against Fram before going out on penalties. Valur beat Fylkir 2-0 in the other semi to reach the Final for the first time since lifting the trophy three years running in the early 1990s.

KR coach Magnus Gylfason was the first major managerial casualty of the summer after just 10 months in charge with the club hovering perilously close to the relegation zone. KR were also knocked out of the Cup by Valur, led by Willum Thor Thorsson, whom Gylfason replaced at the end of last season. Former KR player Sigursteinn Gislason has taken the reins, though his only previous coaching experience was as assistant at capital neighbours Vikingur.

Former international keeper Birkir Kristinsson looks to have made the final appearance of his 21-year career after fracturing a shoulder blade while playing for FH. The 41-year-old had already announced he would retire at the end of the season.

Rab Christie

LATVIA

Early success for Ashworth

Former Ventspils coach Paul Ashworth made a successful return to Latvia by winning his first four games in charge of champions Skonto Riga. The 35-year-old Englishman also led them to a 1-0 win in the second leg of their Champions League qualifier against Rabotnicki Kometal of Macedonia, though Skonto were already effectively out after losing the first leg 6-0, a result that led to the sacking of predecessor Jurijs Andrejevs.

Despite Skonto's good League run, they still trailed leaders Metalurgs Liepaja by 12 points.

Andres Must

WALES

Euro progress

Welsh clubs have enjoyed their most successful season in Europe, with Total Network Solutions having put in two creditable performances in the Champions League qualifier against holders Liverpool, and Rhyl and Carmarthen Town both clearing the first hurdle in the UEFA Cup.

At home, Llanelli boss Nicky Turner was sacked even before the season kicked off, with new Spanish director of football Lucas Cazorla Luque taking on his responsibilities. The switch came in the week Llanelli signed eight full-time players, including four of Luque's compatriots who have Spanish League experience. The club's new owners, investment group Jesco, intend to make the club fully professional to challenge for European qualification and the title.

Mel Thomas

NORTHERN IRELAND

Curtains for Coleraine?

Coleraine face bankruptcy and consequent extinction because of estimated debts of £1.3million. Omagh Town were forced to shut up shop in May after also hitting the financial buffers.

Tommy Kincaid has left Glenavon, who he guided back into the Premier Division last season, following a contractual dispute. He is replaced by Jimmy Brown, assistant at champions Glentoran. Meanwhile, Cliftonville boss Liam Beckett has resigned on "a matter of principle"; assistant Eddie Patterson takes over as caretaker.

Roy Kitson

Called back to the colours...Daniel Andersson

Daniel in, Patrik out

SWEDEN

THERE HAVE BEEN mixed fortunes for Malmo's Andersson brothers. While Patrik, the former national team captain, suffered a career-ending knee injury in the Champions League third qualifying round against Thun of Switzerland, younger sibling Daniel was handed a national team recall.

"It is a hard decision, but it seems my body cannot take it any longer," said 34-year-old Patrik, the former Monchengladbach, Bayern Munich and Barcelona player, who has had several injuries in recent years. He played in Sweden's third-placed 1994 World Cup team and won the Champions League with Bayern in 2001. Daniel, 29, returned to Malmo a year ago from Italy and has put in consistently good performances in recent months.

Djurgardens, Malmo fellow title challengers, have been hit by the controversial departure of top scorer Soren Larsen to Schalke. They accused the German club of making an illegal approach. His replacement is Mattias Jonson from Norwich.

Former national team defender Andreas Jakobsson has left Southampton to rejoin his old club Helsingborgs, while Hammarby boosted their championship challenge by signing defender Joakim Jensen from HJK Helsinki.

Pentti Hietanen

Hearts make thumping start

Hearts of joy...the players celebrate a goal against Kilmarnock

SCOTLAND

AS RANGERS AND CELTIC stumbled during the early weeks of the new League campaign, Hearts suggested that the Old Firm duopoly may finally be under threat by going top of the table after winning their first three games.

The Edinburgh club have undergone some radical changes in the past few months, with the arrival of a new owner, Lithuanian Vladimir Romanov, a new coach, George Burley, and quality signings such as Greece defender Takis Fissas from Benfica. But Hearts appear to have got the blend right from the start, having beaten Kilmarnock 4-2 and Dundee United 3-0 away, either side of a 4-0 thumping of Hibernian in the Edinburgh derby.

Champions Rangers slipped up by losing 3-2 at Aberdeen on the third match day, while Celtic, under new boss Gordon Strachan, only just scraped a 4-4 draw at Motherwell on the opening day. This came three days after the Bhoys' disastrous 5-0 Champions League qualifying defeat away to Artmedia Bratislava, and although a 4-0 victory in the return saved face, it could not recoup any of the estimated £10million lost by not reaching the group stage.

Alan Fairley

Hakan back in the fold

TURKEY

Far from finished...veteran Hakan Sukur was recalled to the Turkish colours by Fatih Terim

HAKAN SUKUR was recalled to the national team set-up after an absence of 11 months, appearing in the 3-1 friendly defeat by Bulgaria in August. The 34-year-old got the nod from new national coach Fatih Terim to revive an international career that was apparently over.

Hakan is used to the wilderness. He spent much of his time on the bench during two stints at club level in Italy, while journalists had him all but hanging up his boots after his dismal performances for Turkey during their surprise run to the semi-finals at the 2002 World Cup. His taciturn attitude at Galatasaray has caused repeated ructions with successive managers, while his recent public profession of devotion to an Islamic sect leader has won him no friends.

There was little surprise when Ersun Yanal dropped Hakan when taking over as national coach last year. The veteran's dwindling form and the need to find new striking blood meant Yanal felt able to sideline him despite his huge popularity among fans and sections of the media. But it seems Turkey cannot do without him after all, with Terim, Yanal's successor, bringing him back into the fold.

The ever-confident Hakan, who has long divided observers into devotees and detractors, always protested he should never have been dropped. Statistics are on his side: he has scored 46 goals in 97 appearances, by far the highest tally by a Turkey forward. Even when not selected, his shadow hung over his replacements – whenever they did badly, it was said to be because Hakan was not there.

At the same time, the veteran has continued to score at a reasonable rate at club level. Last season he hit 18 League goals for Galatasaray, plus another four in the Turkish Cup. He also appears to have the confidence of the club's new Belgian coach, Eric Gerets, although he failed to score in the first two League games of the new campaign.

The few Turkish strikers who have shown promise in recent years never seem to reach the kind of consistency Hakan achieved at the height of his career. As the veteran was preparing to make his much-publicised return to the national team, Ilhan Mansiz, formerly tipped as Hakan's international replacement, made a quiet return to the Turkish League with modest side Ankaragucu. Seemingly, the 30-year-old's international career is over well ahead of the older man's.

Suna Erdem

GREECE

Zagorakis given hero's welcome

Theo Zagorakis, Greece's Euro 2004-winning skipper, received a tumultuous reception when returning to former club PAOK Salonika on a two-year contract. The 34-year-old, who had been released after a season at Bologna, was greeted by 3,000 fans at Salonika airport and another 5,000 at the club's offices when he arrived to sign on.

"The reception was unbelievable and I thank the supporters for that," said Zagorakis. "I always had it in mind that I would return to PAOK, for me the best team in Greece."

The midfielder, who has won a record 107 caps, was last at PAOK in 1998. He joined Leicester in England, staying for two seasons, then moved on to AEK Athens and Bologna.

Panathinaikos have announced that their new stadium will be built by 2008 after agreeing a deal with the Athens city authorities. It will be built in the Votanikos district, near the city centre. The club currently play in the Olympic stadium.

Lou Economopoulos

SLOVENIA

Veterans offer services to fallen clubs

A number of former internationals are among the veteran players to have offered to appear for two of Slovenia's oldest clubs who have been demoted to the Fifth Division because of bankruptcy.

Miran Pavlin, Saso Udovic and Djoni Novak announced their willingness to play for Ljubljana, while Greg Zidana, Zoran Ubavic and Milko Djurovski offered their services to Olimpija Bezigrad, the new club formed from the remnants of former champions Olimpija Ljubljana. Even former Real Madrid and Yugoslavia forward Predrag Mijatovic said he would play for the latter.

Zdravko Reic

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Ref beaten up "over wrong result"

Referee Lazo Aleksic was beaten up at the end of Sarajevo's 1-0 victory away to Posusje, allegedly because the game was meant to have ended in a draw in accordance with a supposed agreement with a betting

ring. Aleksic was hit by a number of individuals, including Posusje coach Vjekoslav Lokica, and had to be defended by police.

Siroki Brijeg president Mijo Jelic was reported to have intervened to stop an alleged match-rigging attempt by another betting ring. Members of the Siroki squad and the squad of their opponents, Zrinjski, had allegedly been tapped up to engineer a 3-3 draw when the two clubs met in the second League round. In fact, the game ended goalless.

Zdravko Reic

CROATIA

Hajduk humiliated

New Hajduk Split coach Miroslav Blazevic has already come under pressure to resign following the club's shameful 8-0 aggregate defeat by Debrecen of Hungary in the Champions League second qualifying round. Protesting supporters called for the head of Blazevic, plus president Branko Grgic and director of sport Igor Stimac.

The club's response was that they simply had not got the money to reinforce the squad.

It was the second year in a row that Hajduk had exited at that stage of the Champions League, last time losing to Irish side Shelbourne.

Zdravko Reic

MACEDONIA

Rabotnicki miss out

Pance Stojanov missed a great opportunity to cause a major Champions League upset when he missed a 70th-minute penalty for Rabotnicki Kometal in the second leg away to Lokomotiv Moscow with the aggregate score at 1-1. The Russian side went on to score two late goals, to deny Rabotnicki a place in the third qualifying round.

Michel Stojmanovski

CYPRUS

Victory sweet for Anorthosis

There were mass celebrations in Famagusta after local club Anorthosis beat Trabzonspor of Turkey 3-2 on aggregate to reach the Champions League third qualifying round. The victory was particularly sweet, since Famagusta is in the area of Cyprus invaded and occupied by Turkey 31 years ago. It was the first meeting between clubs from the two countries.

Soulis Theodosiou

Under fire...coach Blazevic attempts to explain away Hajduk Split's Euro disaster

MALTA

Stripes the stars

Cup holders Birkirkara made it a hat-trick of Super Cup victories over champions Sliema Wanderers when easily winning this season's curtain-raiser 3-0. The Stripes then thumped Valletta 4-2 at home and Msida St Joseph 5-2 away to take an early lead in the League. Sliema got over their Super Cup slip, beating potential title challengers Hibernians 3-0 in their first League match.

Marsaxlokk, who have signed former Charlton and Ipswich midfielder Chris Bart-Williams from APOEL Nicosia of Cyprus, kicked off with a hard-earned 2-1 win over promoted Hamrun Spartans.

Carmel Busuttil, assistant national team coach, has quit after a dispute over his new contract. Busuttil had been tipped to succeed head coach Horst Heese at the end of the year.

Former national team goalkeeper David Cluett has died in England at the age of 39. Cluett set the national team record of 736 minutes without conceding a goal in 1993-94.

Domenico Aquilina

ISRAEL

Haifa blow it

Maccabi Haifa threw away their chance of qualifying for the Champions League third qualifying round when conceding an 88th-minute goal in the second, home leg against Malmo of Sweden. Until then, the Israeli champions appeared to be on their way into the next round, leading on away goals with the aggregate score at 4-4, even though Shlomi Arbeitman was sent off 20 minutes from time.

Derek Fattal

Odita shoots down Serif

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

NIGERIAN STRIKER Obiora Odita scored both goals in Partizan's 2-0 aggregate victory over Serif Tiraspol of Moldova in the Champions League second qualifying round. Partizan, weakened by the departure of captain and playmaker Sasa Ilic to Galatasaray, were off-form in both legs, but did just enough.

The champions started their title defence with two wins, while arch-rivals Red Star Belgrade disappointed in their first League game under coach Walter Zenga, only drawing 2-2 away to Hajduk Kula.

Vojvodina Novi Sad sacked coach Milan Djuricic after losing both their opening games. Assistant Miroslav Curcic has been appointed caretaker.

Misa Pavic, one of the country's most famous coaches, has died aged 85 in Valjevo, Serbia. Pavic's golden period was in the 1960s, when he enjoyed great success with Red Star Belgrade. Later, he moved abroad, coaching Standard Liege, Benfica, Celta Vigo and Atletico Madrid.

Vladimir Novak

Target man...Odita's goals were enough to put Partizan through

Buriak ditched after shock Euro exit

UKRAINE

LEONID BURIAK was fired after just five unbeaten League games in charge of Kyiv Dynamo. What cost him his job was the humiliating 3-2 aggregate defeat by Thun of Switzerland in the Champions League qualifiers and an apparent breakdown in communication with leading players.

"There is no logical explanation for our defeat in Switzerland [Dynamo lost 1-0 after drawing the first leg 2-2] but something has not been done properly by the coach and he must have had some bearing on it," said striker Serhii Rebrov, ironically Buriak's first signing after he replaced Jozef Szabo in the summer.

Anatoliy Demianenko, an assistant to former coaches Valerii Lobanovskyi and Szabo, has taken the helm on a temporary basis.

There was a far rosier picture at champions Shakhtar Donetsk, who won their first five League games to lead surprise side Metalist Kharkiv by three points and Dynamo by four.

Oleg Zadernovsky

Farewell Dynamo...Buriak has paid a heavy price for failure to reach the Champions League group stage

POLAND

FA chairman denies match-fixing

FA chairman Michal Listkiewicz has threatened legal action after being accused of involvement in match-fixing by Piotr Dziurowicz, the chairman of relegated GKS Katowice.

In an interview with the *Gazeta Wyborcza* newspaper, Dziurowicz admitted "buying" several matches and paying off players and referees, and named several people, including Listkiewicz, whom he claimed were involved in corrupt practices.

The FA chairman immediately came under intense media scrutiny, but refused to resign, declaring instead that he would take Dziurowicz to court.

"He is a little, mean man who must be in shock after an unsuccessful attempt to keep GKS Katowice in the First Division," said Listkiewicz. "I have never fixed any game."

After their relegation, Katowice were declared bankrupt and demoted to the Fourth Division.

Dziurowicz said he agreed to the interview because he wanted "to finish a certain stage in my life and start a new one without bad things from the past".

Earlier this year, he co-operated with the authorities in their investigation into match-fixing allegations. Six referees, an FA official and the vice-chairman of Second

Division Piast Gliwice have since been arrested and face corruption charges.

The national team won the Valerii Lobanovskyi tournament in Ukraine, beating Serbia & Montenegro 3-2 then Israel by the same score in the final.

Dariusz Kurowski

ROMANIA

Fans hit back at Steaua

Champions Steaua Bucharest have been hit by a supporter boycott, held in protest over the fact that executive president Mihai Stoica punched a fan during the final game of last season after the supporter shouted critical comments about the club's transfer policy. Only 3,000 supporters attended the first home League match – a 4-0 victory over city rivals National.

On top of that, Steaua look set to have to play some future home European games at a neutral venue as punishment for their fans' racist chanting during the home Champions League third qualifying round tie against Rosenborg.

The off-field problems took the gloss off the good start made by new Ukrainian coach Igor Protasov, with Steaua winning their first two League games.

Meanwhile, club owner Gigi Becali has banned a number of journalists from the stadium because of their criticism of the club. Some pundits suggest that Becali should stand down because of the club's puzzling transfer policy, saying several good players have been allowed to leave without adequate replacements being bought. There have also been allegations of financial irregularities.

Radu Timofte

BULGARIA

First blood to Levski

Cup-holders Levski Sofia drew first blood in the battle for supremacy with champions CSKA by beating them on penalties in the Super Cup after a 1-1 draw. The two clubs, who finished well clear of the rest last season, were among five who won their first two games of the new League campaign.

Litex Lovech, one of the few clubs apparently capable of challenging the Big Two, suffered a setback when striker Kostadin Hazurov was ruled out for four months after breaking an ankle bone during a 2-1 defeat by CSKA. Happier news for Lovech was the signing of Bosnia-Herzegovina midfielder Jemal Berberovic from Bayer Leverkusen.

Brazil-born Tiago Silva won his first cap in the 3-1 August friendly win against Turkey. The CSKA left-back received Bulgarian citizenship last year having lived in the country since 2001.

Michael Bowesfield

SLOVAKIA

Picture blurred for Artmedia

Champions Artmedia Bratislava have been unable to repeat their European successes in the domestic League, taking only seven points from their first five games to trail leaders Spartak Trnava by five points. However, they at least beat MSK Zilina, one of their expected championship rivals, 2-1 away in the fourth round of matches.

Artmedia achieved one of the greatest wins in Slovak football history when beating Celtic 5-0 at home in the Champions League second qualifying round. Juraj Halenar emerged as Filip Sebo's heir apparent as Slovakia's premier striker by scoring a superb hat-trick.

Artmedia lost the return 4-0 but had done enough on that amazing night in Bratislava to move to within two games of the Champions League group stage.

Pavol Stracansky

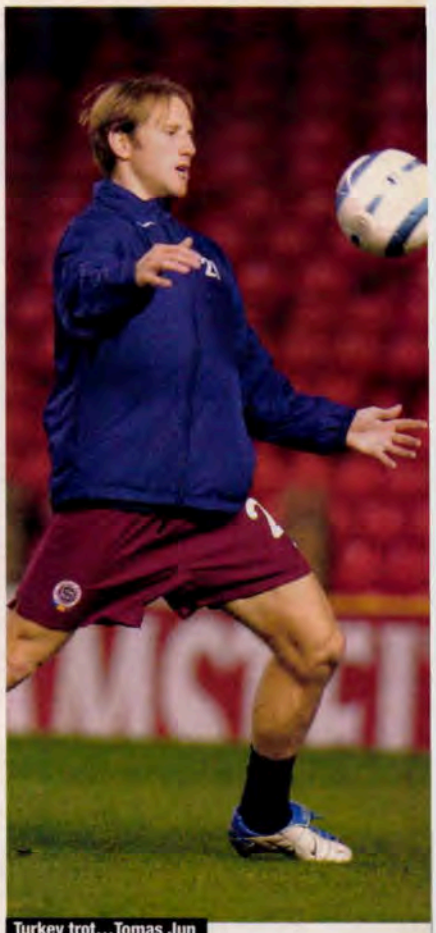
HUNGARY

Debrecen add lift

Debrecen gave Hungarian football a further boost when surging into the Champions League third qualifying round with an 8-0 aggregate win over Hajduk Split. The provincial side had already given domestic football a good shake last term when winning the championship – traditionally dominated by Budapest clubs – for the first time.

Peter Halmosi was the star of the 5-0 second leg win against Hajduk in Split, scoring twice.

Peterjon Cresswell



Turkey trot...Tomas Jun

CZECH REPUBLIC

Sparta bloom without Jun

CHAMPIONS SPARTA PRAGUE shrugged off the last-minute departure of last season's top scorer Tomas Jun by winning both their first two League games 2-1. The 22-year-old national team striker had looked likely to at least start the new season with Sparta. Instead, he signed a five-year contract with Turkish side Trabzonspor.

Jun is the third forward to have left the Letna over the summer, following Milan Pacanda and Michal Meduna.

Slavia Prague, Sparta's eternal rivals, made a poor start to the new League campaign, drawing 1-1 at home to new boys Jihlava and losing 1-0 at Teplice.

A capacity crowd of 7,344 turned out to see Bohemians 1905 play their opening game in the third-tier CFL. The newly-reformed Prague club, rescued from bankruptcy by fans, lost 1-0 to Slavia's B team.

Sam Beckwith

Lokomotiv lose top scorer Sychev

Double blow...Sychev will be a big loss to club and country

RUSSIA

CHAMPIONS AND LEAGUE leaders Lokomotiv Moscow lost more than three points when going down 3-1 to Rubin in Kazan in early August. Top scorer Dmitri Sychev is out for the rest of the season after injuring a knee in a collision with goalkeeper Pavel Kharchik a few seconds before the end.

Sychev's loss is also a huge blow for the national team, for whom the 21-year-old striker has been a key figure, ahead of their final World Cup qualifying matches.

The result in Kazan also brought to an end Lokomotiv's record unbeaten run. The Railwaymen had extended it to 27 games, breaking Moscow Spartak's mark, set in the 1990s, when beating CSKA 3-2 in an intense derby the week before the Rubin game.

Victor Gusev

Sao Paulo sink

BRAZIL

Where did it all go wrong?...Sao Paulo's Libertadores-winning form has disappeared

SAO PAULO have followed up their third Libertadores Cup title by dropping into the relegation zone of the Brazilian championship. After beating Atletico Paranaense 4-0 in the second leg of the Final in mid-July to win 5-1 on aggregate, Sao Paulo went eight domestic games without a victory.

Coach Paulo Autuori and his players habitually blamed the referees for their bad run, although a more likely explanation was simply that their luck had run out. All the breaks that had gone their way during the Libertadores suddenly started going to the opposition.

A typical game was the 1-0 home defeat against Goias, when midfielder Richarlyson was given a direct red card in the 32nd minute for a tackle which, although dangerous and late, is fairly routine in Brazilian football and usually goes unpunished. Also, Amoroso hit a post, forward Roger missed an absolute sitter, Goias goalkeeper Harley played a blinder and, in between, the visitors went upfield and Souza scored the winner.

Sao Paulo's run also included a 4-2 defeat away to Paranaense in a re-run of the Libertadores Final. This had been much-awaited, especially as it was played in the Arena de Baixada stadium, which Paranaense had been banned from using for their home leg of the Libertadores encounter. Paranaense were still bitter over the decision, which was based on the fact that the Arena's capacity was too small under Libertadores rules, even though most observers agree it is the best organised stadium in Brazil. It is in sharp contrast to the stinking, dilapidated Morumbi where Sao Paulo play, for example.

Paranaense wasted no chance in gloating about their win. "Atletico beat Sao Paulo in the most modern stadium in the Americas," said their official website after the game, which was played against the backdrop of a non-stop slanging match between the two team benches.

Sao Paulo had defender Alex sent off after only 10 minutes for a tackle that left Fabricio with damaged knee ligaments and facing an eight-week lay-off. Despite this, Sao Paulo considered the decision harsh. "Alex slipped," claimed goalkeeper Rogerio Ceni. Christian gave Sao Paulo the lead but Paranaense hit back with two goals from Ferreira, one from Alan Bahia and a superb individual effort from Jancarlos, who was then sent off for removing his shirt in the celebration. Amoroso provided a late consolation for Sao Paulo. Paranaense coach Antonio Lopes, famous for sending his teams out to foul the opposition, said: "Sao Paulo came for a war. The tackle on Fabricio was a violent act."

As the competition reached the halfway mark, Sao Paulo were 19th in the 22-team table, in which the bottom four teams go down.

Corinthians led the table with 21 rounds gone after their impressive revival under Marcio Bittencourt, who was promoted to the coach's position initially on a temporary basis after Daniel Passarella was sacked.

But the contest remains wide open, with only four points separating Corinthians and sixth-placed Fluminense. Goias, Parana, Santos and Cruzeiro lie in between.

Brian Homewood

PARAGUAY

Top ref assaulted by fans

Paraguayan police have promised the country's referees that they will beef up security at matches after Carlos Amarilla was attacked outside the stadium following a 1-1 draw between Olimpia and Nacional. The referee's association was invited to a meeting on the day after the attack on Amarilla, who is likely to be Paraguay's referee at the World Cup and officiated at the Confederations Cup in June.

The incident happened after Amarilla sent off three players – two from Olimpia and one from Nacional – and threatened to halt the game as Olimpia fans hurled missiles at Nestor Isasi as he celebrated Nacional's goal. "When we were walking to the car park outside the stadium, we were surrounded by a group of Olimpia supporters and one of them threw a stone at me," Amarilla said.

The referee suffered a deep cut on his cheek which left his shirt covered in blood. He and his assistants took refuge in the office of Olimpia president Oscar Scavone. Amarilla complained that the police had abandoned the stadium as soon as he blew the final whistle.

Brian Homewood

CHILE

Salas comes home

International forward Marcelo Salas has returned home to play for Universidad de Chile, the club where he began his career. "I thought about it for a long time and decided I wanted to be in my country, with my daughters," he said. "I was fed up with all the travelling and being alone."

Salas, who has been plagued by injuries, was at Universidad from 1993 to 1996. Since then he has played for Lazio and Juventus and had two spells with River Plate in Argentina.

Universidad Catolica made a storming start to the closing championship, winning their first six games without conceding a goal.

Brian Homewood

On the attack...All Stars' Ivan Guerrero gets in a cross during the 4-1 defeat of Fulham

MLS in search of power

UNITED STATES

WHILE THE NATIONAL team struggled to score against 10-man Trinidad & Tobago in the recent World Cup qualifier, winning only 1-0 (see below), there were no such problems for the MLS All Stars. They clobbered English top division side Fulham 4-1 in the annual All-Star game that marks the mid-point of the MLS season. Fulham provided feeble opposition, but the win seemed to underline the claims that MLS commissioner Don Garber had made before the game.

"We're no longer outsiders in the world soccer community, we've become central to the aspirations and future of the world's game," he said. "The USA is quietly becoming a power to be reckoned with... our [MLS] teams can stand tall on any given day against any team in the world."

But the ultimate success of MLS has to be achieved within the USA. MLS has to do what no other pro football league has yet done – to survive and flourish in the cut-throat world of American pro sports. The acid test for MLS is whether baseball, basketball and gridiron football are finding it "a power to be reckoned with". The answer would have to be no, they are not. Not yet. But there is plenty of looking over their shoulder by all those sports.

Football's big strength is in the youth area, where it can lay claim to some 10 million young players. Translating that huge interest into support for the pro game is the challenge that MLS faces. By the obvious yardstick – attendances – the League needs to do a lot better. Average crowds have been stuck around the 14,000 level for several seasons.

The League has long-term plans that will certainly ease this problem; for instance, the building of medium-sized, soccer-specific stadiums for its teams. Columbus Crew have their own stadium, while Los Angeles Galaxy and Chivas USA share the Home Depot Center. In August, a third new stadium – Pizza Hut Park, in Frisco, 30 miles north of Dallas – opened as the home for FC Dallas. Meanwhile, Chicago Fire are building a stadium that, like Pizza Hut Park, will receive considerable financial help from the local community.

But in the New York area, MetroStars have been trying in vain for four years to engineer a public/private funding deal for a new stadium. In August, the Anschutz Entertainment Group, which owns the club, finally bit the bullet and announced it would finance the entire cost, estimated at £55million, of a stadium to be built in Harrison, New Jersey.

Paul Gardner

Borgetti breaks record

CONCACAF WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

JARED BORGETTI became Mexico's all-time leading scorer when he fired home the first goal in the 2-0 win over Costa Rica to keep the Tricolor on course for the World Cup. The strike put the forward, newly signed by Bolton in England, on 36 goals, one more than Carlos Hermosillo and Luis Hernandez. Borgetti is also the leading scorer in all regions of the World Cup qualifying competition, with 13 goals.

Four years ago, Costa Rica became the first team to beat Mexico in a World Cup match at the Azteca stadium. This time, a repeat never looked on the cards. However, Mexico struggled to break down the Ticos and only took the lead after an hour, when Borgetti rifled a cross into the roof of the net. Francisco Fonseca got the second four minutes from full-time.

The win kept Mexico top of the final group stage of the marathon CONCACAF qualifying contest with 16 out of 18 points and needing only one more from four games to qualify.

The United States are also close to booking their place in Germany, lying one point behind the Mexicans following an uninspiring 1-0 win at home to Trinidad & Tobago. The goal came after just two minutes when Brian McBride lashed home a Bobby Convey cross.

Both teams finished with 10 men. Trinidad defender Dennis Lawrence was sent off in the 41st minute for bringing down Landon Donovan, while Convey received a second yellow card two minutes from time.

Guatemala emerged as slight favourites to take the third automatic qualifying spot after beating Panama 2-1 in Guatemala City. The victory put Guatemala level with Costa Rica on seven points, but the former have home advantage when the two sides meet in October on the final matchday.

Brian Homewood

Top scorer...Borgetti has hit 36 goals for Mexico, more than any other player

Take that!...Al Ahly's Imad Mutaab lets fly during the away game against Raja Casablanca

Carry on Cairo

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

EGYPT'S top clubs, Al Ahly and Zamalek, both booked themselves semi-final berths in the African Champions League, but the Cairo duo managed it in very different styles. Al Ahly romped through by taking top spot in Group A with a game to spare, having won their first three matches and then gained two away draws. By contrast, Zamalek were forced to scrap through from Group B, and did so having sacked coach Theo Buckner after losing the first match of the new domestic season. They looked to be out of contention after three draws but then a rare inspired spell brought them a 2-1 win at Esperance of Tunisia. Zamalek then won 2-1, with a late penalty, at home to Ivorians ASEC Abidjan in their penultimate group match after spending most of the game on the back foot.

With one matchday remaining, either Etoile Sahel or Esperance, the two Tunisian sides, can finish runners-up to Zamalek to take the group's other semi berth. Both are under new coaches. Etoile Sahel have appointed Bosnian Mehmet Bazdarevic, while Esperance are now under Khaled Ben Yahia after firing Mrab Mahjoubi following a poor run.

Enyimba, Champions League winners for the past two years, look certain to reach the last four after a remarkable turnaround in Group A. The Nigerians were bottom after three games, but wins at home to Morocco's Raja Casablanca and Ajax Cape Town of South Africa put them into second place.

Mark Gleeson

Zimbabwe spring surprise

COSAFA CASTLE CUP

The COSAFA Castle Cup, the southern African championship, kept up its reputation for producing surprise results, with Zimbabwe beating Zambia 1-0 in the Final to win the 2005 title.

The team's success comes at a time of deep political and economic upheaval not only throughout the once prosperous country but also within its beleaguered football association.

Zambia looked lethargic having been taken to penalties by hosts South Africa in the previous day's semi-final. That played perfectly into the hands of Zimbabwe, who bogged them down in a dour war of attrition. It was hardly a surprise, therefore, that the Final would be decided by a single goal, and it came from midfielder Francis Chandida six minutes from full-time.

It was the third time Zimbabwe had won the tournament, and they did so after beating the 2004 champions Angola 2-1 in their semi-final.

Mark Gleeson

Elephants on the march

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

AFRICA'S FIVE QUALIFYING berths for next year's World Cup finals remain up for grabs but the penultimate round of matches in early September could see at least one ticket booked.

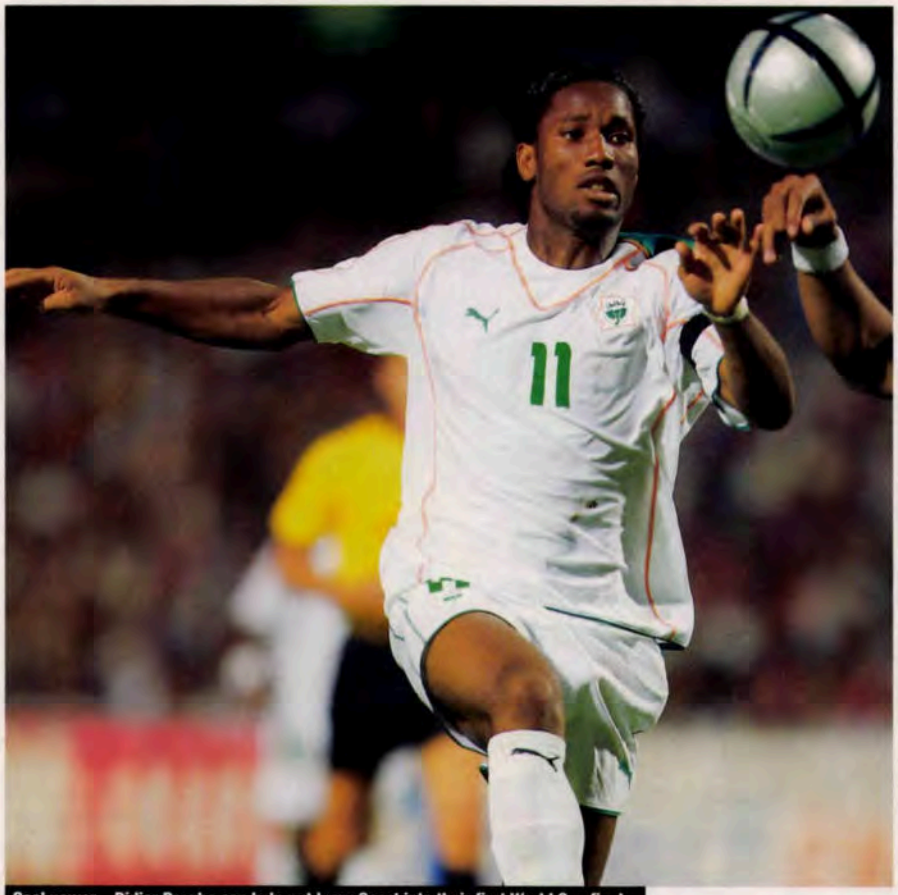
Ivory Coast will qualify for their first finals if they beat Cameroon in Abidjan. Victory would hand them top spot in Group 3, since they already lead the Cameroonians by two points. The Elephants have been the form team in the qualifiers and have prompted many to describe them as the best side to have come out of Africa in over a decade. The team are driven by the goalscoring acumen of Didier Drogba and Aruna Dindane, while they also have new PSG signing Bonaventure Kalou captaining from midfield and Arsenal's Kolo Toure in defence.

However, the Ivorians have never beaten Cameroon in a competitive game and also suffered a morale blow when losing 3-0 to France in an August friendly in Montpellier.

Tunisia look like being the only one of the African representatives at the last World Cup to get another trip to the finals next year. A 1-0 win over Kenya in August put them top of Group 5, a point clear of Morocco, with the two north African sides due to meet in Tunis in their last game in October.

Angola, Ghana and Togo will take the other three places if they win their remaining two matches. Togo have a one-point lead over Zambia in Group 1; Ghana share top place in Group 2 with South Africa but have the better head-to-head record, as is the case with Angola and Nigeria in Group 4.

Mark Gleeson



Goal power...Didier Drogba can help put Ivory Coast into their first World Cup finals

ROUND-UP

Sadd man...Clayton

NORTH AFRICA

● TUNISIA'S Esperance have sold international wing-back Clayton to Al Sadd in Qatar, while Cup winners Esperance Zarzis have replaced coach Lassaad Maamer with Mohamed Sraieb.

● Algerian coach Azzedine Ait-Djoudi has taken over at Mouloudia Oudja in neighbouring MOROCCO. Former Portuguese Olympic team coach Jose Romao is the new boss of former African champions Wydad Casablanca. Meanwhile, Raja Casablanca have sold leading striker Hicham Aboucherouane to Lille in France and the Burkina Faso international Youssof Kone to Safi.

● Morcire Sylla, who won three African Champions Cup titles with GUINEAN side Hafia in 1972, 1975 and 1977, has died in Rabat in Morocco. He was also a member of the Guinean national side that finished runners-up in the 1976 African Nations Cup finals.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

● Township Rollers have ended a decade-long drought by winning the Super League in BOTSWANA.

● Henrico Botes has been named as NAMIBIA'S Footballer of the Year. The striker recently signed for South African club Moroka Swallows.

● Former SOUTH AFRICAN international Eric Tinkler, who played for Cagliari and Barnsley, has returned home from Portugal to take over as player-coach at Wits University. His former national team colleague Mark Fish has retired after a succession of injuries. Mamelodi Sundowns won the season-opening Charity Cup.

● MALAWI have appointed English FA instructor Michael Hennigan as coach until the end of the year.

WEST AFRICA

● ASEC Abidjan won the IVORIAN Cup for a record 14th time, beating Sewe Sport 1-0 in the Final. Mamadou Doumbia scored the goal in the 18th minute.

● GHANA will use five venues – Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, Cape Coast and Sekondi-Takoradi – when hosting the 2008 African Nations Cup finals.

● NIGERIA-born Orosco Anonam has become the latest in a growing list of Africans to be called up to play for Malta. The midfielder is at Maltese side Sliema Wanderers.

● Edme Codjo has returned as national coach of BENIN, in place of Frenchman Serge Deveze.

● In BURKINA FASO, US Ouagadougou beat ASF Bobo-Dioulasso 2-0 in the Cup Final, the goals coming from Hyacinthe Ouedraogo and Issaka Tapsoba.

CENTRAL AFRICA

● Manga Sport won the Cup in GABON, beating Sogea 2-0 in the Final with goals from Humel Yinda and Seydou Barro in each half.

Mark Gleeson

Uzbeks rally to stay alive

ASIAN WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

Battling on...Maxim Shatskikh (left), one of Uzbekistan's scorers, vies with Kuwait's Jarragh Al-Ataiqi

AFTER BEING just 45 minutes from another failure, Uzbekistan kept their World Cup hopes alive by beating Kuwait 3-2 in Tashkent to finish third in qualifying Group A and gain entry to the Asian play-off against Bahrain.

The Uzbeks, under new English coach Bobby Houghton, needed to beat Kuwait to progress, while a draw would have been enough for their opponents, and goals from Bader Al-Mutawa and Bashar Abdullah in the first half-hour looked almost certain to give the visitors the day. However, Server Djeparov pulled a goal back from the penalty spot four minutes from the end of the first half, and strikes from Maxim Shatskikh and Anvar Soliev after the break put the hosts through.

Now Bahrain, who were already guaranteed of finishing third in Group B before the last matchday, stand in the way of Uzbekistan and a play-off against the fourth-placed CONCACAF finishers for a berth at the Germany finals.

"What really changed it for us was the penalty," said Houghton, who had taken over less than three weeks before the Tashkent clash. "That gave us a real lift, especially as we hadn't played badly. Trailing 2-1 at half-time made it so much easier to get people to believe that we could win, and in the end we could have scored five goals because we had so many good chances and hit the crossbar twice."

Uzbekistan have had little success since becoming an independent nation following the break-up of the Soviet Union. They had been expected to become a major power in Asia since many of their players are established with top clubs in Russia and Ukraine. However, they have only a gold medal at the 1994 Asian Games to show for their efforts. They barely registered in Asia's qualifying tournament for either the 1998 or 2002 World Cup, although they did begin to show some promising signs at the Asian Cup in China last year. There, they reached the quarter-finals before being bundled out by Bahrain, whom they now face in the World Cup on September 3 and 7.

Uzbekistan's qualifying campaign for 2006 has been fraught with problems. German coach Hans Jurgen Gede was fired after a poor start and his replacement, Ravshan Haydarov, also struggled, leading to Houghton's appointment. The Englishman, who has a wealth of experience working in Asia, having coached the Chinese national team and several Middle Eastern clubs, has now had a taste of the difficulties that faced his predecessors. "There are some logistical problems, and also it's hard when you are making a comparison between the players who play in Uzbekistan and those who are outside," he says. "It's not easy to see the games from Russia, and often the lads who are at Russian clubs aren't always playing regularly. There's also a belief that the guys in Russia are the better players, and I'm not so sure that's necessarily true."

Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Japan and Iran had long since booked their places in Germany. The Saudis finished top of Group A by beating the Koreans 1-0 in Seoul on the final matchday, while Japan took the honours in Group B with a 2-1 win over Iran in Yokohama.

Michael Church

ASIAN ROUND-UP

● UZBEK international Alexander Geynrikh has joined Torpedo Moscow after spending six months on loan at home country side Pakhtakor from another Russian capital team, CSKA.

● BANGLADESH have appointed Diego Andre Cruciani to head their national team. The Argentinian, who has signed a one-year deal, previously worked as assistant coach at Independiente.

● SINGAPORE'S Tampines Rovers won the second ASEAN Club Championship, beating Malaysia's Pahang 4-2 in the Final.

● Two-time VIETNAMESE Cup winners Binh Dinh narrowly avoided a relegation play-off in the V-League as they came from two goals down to draw with Song Da Nam Dinh in their final match of the season.

● Veteran IRAN defender Yahya Golmohammadi has left big Tehran club Pirouzi to link up with national team skipper Ali Daei at Hazfi Cup winners Saba Battery.

Michael Church & Azam Mahmood

Advance party...Hasebe plays deep in midfield but loves to go forward

Hasebe is hot

JAPAN

MAKOTO HASEBE again showed himself to be one of Japan's hottest young properties by scoring a goal in each leg of Urawa Reds' League Cup quarter-final victory over Shimizu S-Pulse. The 21-year-old has made the League Cup tournament his own in recent years. He was part of the Reds team that won the tournament in 2003, the club's first ever trophy, and last year was voted best young player of the competition.

Hasebe was also included in the J.League's Best XI in 2004, and he has continued to show progress. Having started out as an attacking midfielder, the youngster now plays much deeper, but he still loves to bring the ball forward. "You can tell how good Hasebe is from how often he is fouled," says Reds' German manager Guido Buchwald. "Nobody can stop him fairly."

On the transfer front, Yokohama F Marinos have signed Jubilo Iwata's Brazilian striker Rodrigo Gral, while Kashiwa Reysol have brought in former Brazil striker Franca from Bayer Leverkusen. Franca joins compatriot Reinaldo, who arrived at Kashiwa on loan from PSG in July.

Tokyo Verdy 1969 have appointed Brazilian coach Vadao, from Ponte Preta, to replace the sacked Ossie Ardiles.

Mike Plastow & Yumiko Nagae

China find consolation

EAST ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

CHINA GAINED SOME consolation for failing to reach the final group stage of Asia's World Cup qualifying tournament by winning the East Asian Championship in South Korea in early August. The Chinese, under new coach Zhu Guanghu, beat North Korea 2-0 and drew with Japan (2-2) and South Korea (1-1) to finish top of the table.

"Winning this tournament will give us a lot of confidence, but we still have a lot of things to change in Chinese football," said Zhu, who officially took over as Arie Haan's long-term replacement in March. "It's important we look at the process involved in playing in tournaments like these. We can't just celebrate winning."

Japan were second, as in the inaugural edition two years ago, ahead of North Korea on goal difference. South Korea, the 2003 champions, finished bottom, putting Dutch coach Jo Bonfrere under intense pressure to resign. He finally quit a fortnight later following South Korea's 1-0 home defeat by Saudi Arabia on the final matchday of the World Cup qualifiers.

Although the Koreans had already booked their ticket for Germany, they had hardly been convincing during the campaign, and their poor showing at the East Asian Championship only made matters worse.

Michael Church

Cup of cheer...the Chinese take the trophy

Solomons go Brazilian

OCEANIA

● As Australia brought in Dutch coach Guus Hiddink ahead of their WORLD CUP QUALIFYING PLAY-OFF against Solomon Islands, their opponents also appointed a new boss. Brazilian Airton Andrioli is now in charge, in succession to Alan Gillet. The countries meet over two legs in early September to decide who goes on to face the fifth-placed South American side for a place in the finals.

● Sydney FC's 18-game unbeaten run was ended by Perth Glory, who won 1-0 in the semi-finals of the pre-season tournament for AUSTRALIA's new A League. Substitute Nick Ward grabbed the goal a minute into second-half stoppage time.

● FIJIAN striker Esala Masi was released by his Malaysian club Johor at the end of July but proved he was still a key figure at international level by scoring the winning goal for his country in both their friendly meetings with India two weeks later. Masi's first-half penalty was the only goal of the first encounter, at Lautoka, and he then secured Fiji's 2-1 victory in the second game, in Suva, after India had taken a first-half lead.

● In NEW ZEALAND, Palmerston North Marist reached their first Chatham Cup Final by beating Wellington Olympic 2-1 after extra-time. Three-time winners Central United beat Christchurch's Halswell United 3-1 in the other semi.

● League champions J P Su'uria completed the Double on the SOLOMON ISLANDS by defeating East Harbour Strikers 4-2 in the Cup Final.

Paul Moon

Burns treatment

David Conn laments a missed opportunity for reform in the recently published, government-backed review of the Football Association

ENGLISH FOOTBALL IS wallowing in money, but most of it is in the hands of a few, already filthy-rich clubs. So how should the governing body, the Football Association, best fashion the game into a proud sport fit for the 21st century?

If football is about more than players, agents and club owners becoming multi-millionaires, what should be its mission? To encourage more people to play the game for the joy and fitness it brings? To insist clubs be community institutions, not voracious corporations, to ensure the commercial bonanza is shared more equally? Come to that, in the age of global TV millions, what role is there for the historic sporting associations whose roots lie in the belief that sport should be played for the love of it?

Into these huge questions, at the beginning of this year, stepped the distinctly grey figure of Lord Terry Burns, formerly a senior civil servant in the Treasury, now the chairman of a bank, Abbey. Burns was appointed, with some encouragement from the government, following last summer's embarrassments when FA chief executive Mark Palios and England coach Sven Goran Eriksson were revealed to have had affairs with secretary Faria Alam. Palios resigned, but that in-house tawdriness was, in truth, a strange reason to launch a "structural review" of the FA.

Nevertheless, Burns was handed a unique opportunity: for the first time, the FA was to be held up to independent scrutiny and recommendations made to enable it better to fashion football's future.

As Burns was an obscure establishment figure, the FA was keen to give him some football credibility, and so stressed that he is a supporter

Embarrassments and riches...FA headquarters in London's Soho Square

Money-spinner...the Premier League generates millions in revenues

of Queen's Park Rangers, the west London club touched with a hint of flamboyant appeal.

In 2001, QPR experienced financial collapse, one of 38 Football League clubs to have become insolvent since the First Division clubs broke away, with the connivance of the FA, to form the Premier League in 1992. QPR were bought in August 1996 by Chrysalis music mogul Chris Wright, floated on the stock market in the hope of riches, signed players expensively but failed to win promotion. In April 2001 they went into administration having made total losses of £27million.

Throughout this period, it turns out Burns was a director of the club – although not the floated company owned by Wright – and so well-placed to understand the deep-rooted problems English football has, along with the passion it inspires. QPR came out of administration eventually in 2002 by borrowing £10m from a company, ABC Corporation, registered in Panama, with undeclared owners, which still has a mortgage on the Loftus Road ground.

From the start of his FA review, however, Burns refused to accept any suggestion that English football is in crisis, saying instead "football continues to enjoy very good health". He mostly steered clear of any of the more challenging questions, confining himself to negotiating the FA's dysfunctional bureaucracy, its impossibly constituted board, forest of committees, and much-maligned Council of 91 old men and one woman.

When I met Burns in July, I found him dazzled by the Premier League's success and status. He refused to accept that the financial gap between the Premier League and the Football League is a structural fault that has contributed to many clubs' financial problems or that more money should be shared. He laughed at the idea that the FA's amateur representatives might consider they deserve equal status to those of the Premier League, given, he said admiringly, the revenue the Premier League generates.

His QPR support wasn't quite what was in the brochure; he grew up in the north-east, supporting Sunderland. He told me he went to university with Wright, so when Wright took over QPR, Burns was made a director and watched matches from the directors' box. Burns said he didn't know much about the new people in charge or the club's situation now, but he still goes along to watch most home matches from the directors' box.

I came away so dispirited that when Burns finally delivered his report, at the beginning of August, it was a pleasant surprise. There was, as expected, not much vision, no grand statements, nothing to inspire, but his brief description of what the FA should strive for was primly well-intentioned: "Governance with integrity; the promotion of participation, standards, and financial well-being of the game; the fostering of development at all levels; and effective representation of the game abroad." Few could argue with that. Burns did not propose the FA should rein in the Premier League, or strive to have money more equally distributed, but nor did he suggest handing more power to the Premiership.

Reshaping the Board

Currently there are six representatives of the amateur game on the FA Board, balanced by four from the Premier League and four from the Football League, a structure that has led to bloody power plays from the Premier League chairmen. Burns suggests having just three representatives from each of the professional and amateur branches, as non-executive directors, along with two more "independent" non-executives and just two executive directors running the organisation – a significant stab at more autonomy for the FA. He also suggested beefing up the FA's regulatory role, although he didn't define clearly what misconduct it ought to be regulating.

Importantly, he recommended formalising how the FA's money should be split: 50-50 between the amateur and professional games. Some might wonder why, when the Premier League has its own £1.4bn TV deal and its clubs make money in fistfuls, it also needs 50 per cent of the TV money generated by the FA Cup and England team. However, at least Burns' recommendation would safeguard the grassroots' 50 per cent from any further erosion.

Burns' own research included a finding, in a survey by some consultants, Genesis, that the European governing body, UEFA, is particularly critical of the small amounts of money going into grassroots English football from the Premier League. "There will be increased pressure internationally," the survey concluded, "to reverse the pendulum which is perceived to have swung too far in favour of commercial development rather than the holistic, democratic development of the sport."

Fine sentiments, but Burns' actual report included no such idea, nor did it suggest much that might start the pendulum swinging back. The angriest reaction came from Supporters Direct, the campaigning fans' body, because Burns failed to firmly recommend that fans be represented on the FA Council. Instead, he left reform to the Council itself, making only the timid suggestion of "limited representation" for supporters, players, managers and others who have never had a seat at the governing body's table.

Burns had been widely expected to hammer the Council into more modern, representative shape, and this seems a glaring failure.

Otherwise, the Burns report was generally thought to provide some sensible, clerical recommendations for making the current system work better. It provides no answers to the major questions challenging sport, says not a jot about the financial imbalance in the game, the mess of insolvencies that have spattered it during its boom years, or the serial scandals that alienate so many fans even while they continue to turn up and tune in. Yet his report, despite its blinding greyness, can still be expected to provoke turf wars between football's many vested interests – the Football League is upset that it could be reduced to one representative on the board, the Council will have to agree to reduced roles for committees, and so on.

There was something grimly comic in what happened the day after Burns delivered his report about football being in good health. At QPR, the club's majority owner and director, Gianni Paladini, was allegedly held up at gunpoint in the boardroom before a match. Four men have been charged with blackmail and firearms offences. We don't know if Burns was in the directors' box at the time, thinking about the correct structure for FA committees.

Soon Burns will become the chairman of Marks & Spencer, another stalwart British institution struggling for a role in the 21st century. When I met Burns, he was much cheered by the fact that M&S retains 30 per cent of Britain's underwear market. He has done a small job for football, so we should wish him well with the smalls at M&S.

Establishment figure...Lord Terry Burns

MEDIA WATCH

The 'Is Owen Going?' saga

"Manchester United have manoeuvred into pole position in the race to sign Michael Owen, should the England forward be told that he has no future with Real Madrid."
● *The Times'* Oliver Kay sparks off the latest round of speculation on June 20

"Manchester United have decided not to buy Michael Owen, according to Carlos Queiroz. The Old Trafford No 2 insists Alex Ferguson will not pursue his interest."
● On June 24, *The Sun's* Eric Beauchamp says there will be no deal

"Real Madrid last night put the block on Michael Owen moving back to England. The former Liverpool ace has been linked with a move all summer but Real have completed a sensational U-turn by insisting he is not for sale."
● *The Daily Star's* Pete Jenson puts another angle on June 30

"Michael Owen has been hawked around the Premiership this summer but looks like ending up where he started – in Madrid. England's top striker was offered to Manchester United and Chelsea as bait for Cristiano Ronaldo and Frank Lampard. Real Madrid were also ready to do a deal with Newcastle for 25-year-old Owen, with the Geordies prepared to pay £18million. But the former Liverpool star wasn't interested in that proposal. If he had to return to the Premiership, it would have to be to one of the big three – Chelsea, Arsenal or United."
● *The Star* changes its story, though, via Paul Hetherington, on July 3

"Michael Owen is trying to end speculation about his Real Madrid future and has said that he has no intention of leaving this summer. 'I have never said that I want to leave,' Owen said. 'It's the English press that are placing me away from Madrid.' "
● Gordon Tynan claims Owen is happy in Spain in July 20's *Independent*

"Sir Alex Ferguson is poised with an £11million move for Michael Owen that could trigger the Premiership's biggest transfer scramble for years."
● John Richardson and Tony Stenson claim the race really is on in the *Sunday Express* of July 31

" 'We have Fernando Morientes, Peter Crouch, Milan Baros, Djibril Cisse, Neil Mellor and Florent Sinama-Pongolle already here. We are not even thinking about Owen because we have a lot of strikers. I'm thinking about my own players, not about what's happening at Real Madrid.' "
● *The Sun* of August 2 quotes Rafa Benitez saying Liverpool have no interest in the forward

"Michael Owen has confirmed that 'three or four' Premiership clubs have been in contact with him regarding a possible transfer from Real Madrid. The England striker did not name them but Manchester United, Newcastle, Arsenal, Chelsea and possibly his former employers Liverpool are the most likely buyers, at a price of £12million."
● The *Daily Telegraph's* William Johnson claims UK interest with some authority on August 4

"Arsene Wenger yesterday declared that he would not buy Michael Owen because it would be impossible for him to play alongside Thierry Henry."
● The Arsenal manager rules himself out of any race for Owen in August 5's *Independent*

"Toon chairman Freddy Shepherd last night called off a planned trip to Spain to negotiate a deal with Real Madrid chiefs after Owen insisted he will not go to Newcastle."
● *The Sun's* Eric Beauchamp and Carl Liddle rule Newcastle out of the hunt on August 10

Will he or won't he?...Owen

" 'He knows how big this football club is, how passionate it is. I would assume Michael is very much aware he has to be playing this year. The possibility of the bench in Madrid would not be very appealing to him, especially in a World Cup year.' "
● Newcastle boss Graeme Souness makes public his pitch for Owen in August 13's *Guardian*

"Michael Owen's eagerness to return to England will be tested by whether he is prepared to accept a cut in salary. Liverpool are trying to strike a loan deal with Real Madrid, just 12 months after Owen moved to the Bernabeu, but he will have to agree a cut in his £85,000-a-week wage."
● On August 13, *The Express* reckons Owen could return to Liverpool after all

"If Real Madrid really want to do the right thing by Michael Owen...then they should forget about making a quick profit on the player and allow him to go out on a 12-month loan deal."
● *The Observer's* Paul Wilson also backs the loan idea on August 14

IT'S ALL GONE WRONG FOR...

ANDREAS JOHANSSON

The Swede made just one appearance for Wigan in last season's promotion campaign, but suddenly found himself teed up to become a Latics hero when presented with a gilt-edged scoring chance late on after coming off the bench in the club's debut Premiership fixture against Chelsea. Johansson could have pulled the ball out of the sky and still had time to read a book before slotting his shot home to put Wigan 1-0 ahead. Instead, he hit it first time and volleyed well wide. Lifted by this let-off, Chelsea stormed upfield and grabbed the winner.

Wide of the mark...Johansson

IT'S ALL GONE RIGHT FOR...

DARREN BENT

The 21-year-old forward looked like he'd lost out on his dream of playing in the Premiership when Ipswich failed to make it out of last season's Championship, despite Bent notching an impressive 19 goals for Joe Royle's side. Charlton boss Alan Curbishley was watching closely, though, and paid a fee that could rise to £3million for the youngster. How did Bent react? With two goals away at Sunderland as Charlton started their League campaign with a 3-1 win. Who says the Premiership's the hardest league in the world?

Let's hear it for me...Bent

TALENT SCOUT

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Carlos DIOGO

Real Madrid's new Uruguayan right-back

1983 WAS QUITE a year in the life of Uruguay right-back Victor Hugo Diogo. In November he scored the only goal of a distinguished international career – a vital strike in the first leg of the Copa America Final against Brazil which helped his side towards a 3-1 aggregate win. It was the perfect way to celebrate the birth of a son, who two decades later would also establish himself as the light blues' right-back.

Two other current Uruguay players – Paolo Montero and Diego Forlan – are sons of former internationals, and Carlos Diogo made it three when making his debut in March 2003. Diogo junior has yet to get his hands on the kind of silverware his father accumulated – domestic titles, the Libertadores Cup and the World Club Cup with Penarol, plus the Copa America. But his transfer to Real Madrid this summer is likely to give him a global prominence that was much harder to achieve in Victor Hugo's day.

His rise has been boosted by a canny change of position. Diogo normally featured in midfield as he came up through the ranks with tiny Montevideo club River Plate and with Uruguay's Under-17 and Under-20 sides. But since he is blessed with more athleticism than subtlety, the switch to the right flank has brought out the best in him.

"I'm a player who can get up and down the pitch," said Diogo on his presentation at the Bernabeu. "I can mark, but I also like to join up with the attack and get in sight of the opposing goal."

In fact, the attacking side of his game is more impressive than the defensive. For this reason his most convincing international displays have come at right wing-back, when Uruguay have employed coach Jorge Fossati's favourite 3-4-1-2 formation – the presence of the extra centre-back gives him greater protection to stride forward.

It was during last year's Copa America that Diogo established himself in the side. Uruguay limped into the competition, but regrouped so successfully that they finished third and returned reinvigorated to the tricky task of World Cup qualification. Diogo has been a fixture in the team ever since – although an off-the-ball elbow away to Venezuela brought a red card that means he is currently serving a suspension.

At least the enforced international inactivity means he has more time to settle in at Real Madrid. The move came after a highly successful six-month spell with the much more famous River Plate, of Buenos Aires. He was recommended by River's Uruguayan former great Enzo Francescoli, and although Diogo was unable to help them win any titles, he made a powerful impression with his surges down the right side. Indeed, he left River on the best possible terms – a characteristic long-range rocket shot on the last day of the season brought them victory over Huracan and ensured River's qualification for next year's Libertadores Cup. And maybe now he has joined one of Europe's giants he can set about matching his father's silverware collection.

Tim Vickery

FACT FILE

Club	Real Madrid (Spa)
Country	Uruguay
Born	July 18, 1983, in Montevideo
Previous clubs	River Plate (Uru), Penarol, River Plate (Arg)
International debut	March 2003, v Japan
International caps	12 (0 goals)

Stephen MAKINWA

Striker who snubbed Inter for Palermo

WHAT MONEYBAGS Internazionale president Massimo Moratti wants in the transfer market, he usually gets. Yet occasionally he can be thwarted, as in the instance of brilliant Nigerian striker Stephen Ayodele Makinwa, who recently chose Palermo over the San Siro after jumping ship from relegated Atalanta.

At one point this summer, it seemed inevitable Makinwa would become an Inter player. Both Moratti and Inter coach Roberto Mancini had spoken in glowing terms about the 22-year-old, while the youngster had publicly expressed his desire to sign, saying how he would love to link up with good friend and compatriot Obafemi Martins in the Inter attack.

However, Inter dallied over whether to take Makinwa or one of the other front men on their shopping list – Fabrizio Miccoli (from Juventus), Diego Milito (Genoa), Mirko Vucinic (Lecce) and Marco Di Vaio (Valencia) – and Palermo chief Maurizio Zamparini, a supermarket mogul, saw his chance. In double-quick time, the Nigerian had been whisked to the check-out and a £6million bill paid.

"To begin with, the idea of playing for Inter excited me a lot," says Makinwa. "But as the matter dragged on I became less enthusiastic. Inter were hesitating and so I chose Palermo instead. Palermo made it clear they wanted me, they wanted to get the deal done. They made me feel important."

So they should. After leaving Second Division Genoa for Serie A strugglers Atalanta midway through last season, Makinwa was in a state of footballing grace for the rest of the campaign, scoring six times – each celebrated with his trademark somersault – and harrying defences with his agility, power and pace.

Like Martins, he learnt his trade at Lagos's FC Ebedei, a club founded by Churchill Oliseh, the brother of former Nigeria, Reggiana and Juventus midfielder Sunday Oliseh.

Thanks to the latter's friendship with ex-Reggiana general manager Michele Dal Cin, a pipeline of talent was laid between West Africa and Italy, with Martins and Makinwa among the first to pass through.

On the recommendation of Sunday Oliseh, Makinwa left for Italy at the age of 17, his first club being Veneto amateur side Conegliano. There followed spells with Como's youth and first teams, Reggiana in Serie C and Modena, with whom he made his Serie A debut in January 2004. He then moved on again, to Genoa and Atalanta.

As well as settling into his new club, Makinwa also has some important commitments with Nigeria in the weeks ahead. He marked his November 2004 debut with a goal in the 2-1 friendly defeat by South Africa and now has his heart set on a World Cup finals place. "We have the same points as Angola and our final two games, against Algeria and Zimbabwe, are going to be decisive," says Makinwa. "Perhaps I can score a goal or two to take us to Germany."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Palermo (Ita)
Country Nigeria
Born July 26, 1983, in Lagos
Previous clubs FC Ebedei, Conegliano (Ita), Como (Ita), Reggiana (Ita), Modena (Ita), Genoa (Ita), Atalanta (Ita)
International debut November 2004, v South Africa
International caps 3 (1 goal)

Simon VUKCEVIC

Teen star earning Partizan support

HOW APPROPRIATE THAT rising midfield star Simon Vukcevic wears the No 1 shirt for his club, Partizan Belgrade. For he is far and away the most accomplished young player in Serbia & Montenegro. Dubbed the heir apparent to such exceptional playmakers as Jovan Acimovic, Vladimir Petrovic, Dragan Stojkovic and Dejan Savicevic, the 19-year-old still has a long way to go to emulate the achievements of those thoroughbreds from yesterday. But he clearly has the potential to be eventually housed in the same hall-of-fame stable.

Last season was a most memorable one for Vukcevic, who joined Partizan from hometown club Buducnost Podgorica three years ago. Many observers said Partizan skipper and attacking midfielder Sasa Ilic was the principal architect of their undefeated run to the championship title. But, arguably, Vukcevic was equally influential, proving himself a subtle and inventive creator and also scoring 10 goals.

While the teenager will have to delete the unnecessary showboating from his game, there are many more aspects of his repertoire that demand admiration. He is comfortable using either foot, has a venomous shot from distance, is adept at keeping the ball under pressure and is an outstanding dribbler, constantly fooling defenders with his sleight of foot and instant change of direction. Vukcevic is in his element when allowed to roam, as he is at Partizan, and he has good instincts for locating a weak spot in defences.

His international career is progressing very nicely too. Just a month after helping the Serbia & Montenegro Under-21s reach the Final of the 2004 European Championship – which they lost 3-0 to Italy – he was handed his first senior cap in a friendly against Slovakia in Japan. There should be many more to come his way.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Partizan Belgrade
Country Serbia & Montenegro
Born January 29, 1986, in Podgorica
Previous clubs Buducnost Podgorica
International debut July 2004, v Slovakia
International caps 5 (0 goals)
Honours Serbo-Montenegrin League 2005

Juraj HALENAR

Young Slovak who put Celtic to the sword

NEW CELTIC BOSS Gordon Strachan probably still comes out in a cold sweat on hearing the name Juraj Halenar. The young Artmedia Bratislava marksman proved the nemesis of the Glaswegians in their shock 5-4 aggregate loss to the Slovak side in the Champions League second qualifying round.

Artmedia's 5-0 first-leg victory in Bratislava was very much the Halenar show. Not only did the 22-year-old score a fine hat-trick, but he also set up another goal and impressed throughout with his eagerness, strong running with the ball and intelligent link play.

No one could have expected such an outstanding performance. After all, the Slovakia Under-21 striker had only joined Artmedia from Inter Bratislava a few days earlier and his confidence was hardly high after receiving a red card on his debut, a 1-0 defeat by FK Nitra.

But Artmedia coach Vladimir Weiss insisted: "It was no risk to play Juraj against Celtic. We weren't about to lose faith in him just like that. He's a talented attacker with the right competitive mentality and as soon as he started training with us, he began to establish a rapport with the others. When our top striker, Filip Sebo, left us this summer for Austria Wien, a lot of people thought it would be difficult for us to find an adequate replacement. But we have – and in the same city."

Halenar came up through the youth ranks of Inter Bratislava and scored 12 League goals for them last season. Despite the young striker's departure, Inter coach Karol Brezik is still full of enthusiasm about his former charge. "Halenar is a great prospect...the best we have in the country at the moment," he says. "He has the technique, the physical ingredients and a burning desire to get on in the game. He hasn't played for the senior Slovakia side yet but the breakthrough will come soon. It has to be good for our football that we can call on goalscorers such as [Marek] Mintal, [Robert] Vittek, [Szilard] Nemeth and now Halenar."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Artmedia Bratislava
Country Slovakia
Born June 28, 1983, in Bratislava
Previous clubs Inter Bratislava

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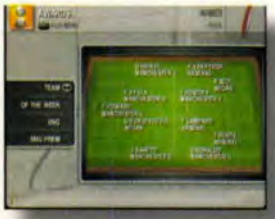

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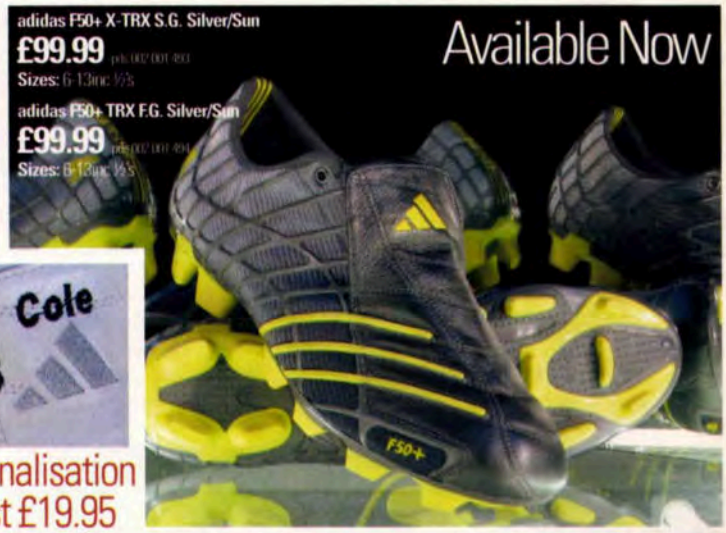

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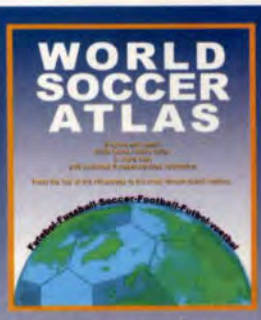

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Group 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Togo	8	5	2	1	14	6	17
Zambia	8	5	1	2	11	9	16
Senegal	8	4	3	1	17	8	15
Congo	8	3	1	4	8	9	10
Mali	8	1	2	5	9	11	5
Liberia	8	1	1	6	3	19	4

05.06.04 Senegal-Congo 2-0
05.06.04 Zambia-Togo 1-0
06.06.04 Liberia-Mali 1-0
19.06.04 Mali-Zambia 1-1
20.06.04 Congo-Liberia 3-0
20.06.04 Togo-Senegal 3-1
03.07.04 Senegal-Zambia 1-0
04.07.04 Congo-Mali 1-0
04.07.04 Liberia-Togo 0-0
04.09.04 Zambia-Liberia 1-0
05.09.04 Mali-Senegal 2-2
05.09.04 Togo-Congo 2-0
10.10.04 Congo-Zambia 2-3
10.10.04 Liberia-Senegal 0-3
10.10.04 Togo-Mali 1-0
26.03.05 Senegal-Liberia 6-1
26.03.05 Zambia-Congo 2-0
27.03.05 Mali-Togo 1-2
05.06.05 Congo-Senegal 0-0
05.06.05 Mali-Liberia 4-1
05.06.05 Togo-Zambia 4-1
18.06.05 Senegal-Togo 2-2
18.06.05 Zambia-Mali 2-1
19.06.05 Liberia-Congo 0-2
03.09.05 Mali-Congo
03.09.05 Zambia-Senegal
04.09.05 Togo-Liberia
07.10.05 Congo-Togo
07.10.05 Liberia-Zambia
07.10.05 Senegal-Mali

Group 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana	8	4	3	1	11	4	15
South Africa	8	5	0	3	9	9	15
DR Congo	8	3	3	2	10	7	12
Cape Verde Is	8	3	1	4	7	9	10
Burkina Faso	8	3	0	5	9	10	9
Uganda	8	2	1	5	4	11	7

05.06.04 Burkina Faso-Ghana 1-0
05.06.04 South Africa-Cape Verde Is 2-1
05.06.04 Uganda-DR Congo 1-0
19.06.04 Cape Verde Is-Uganda 1-0
20.06.04 DR Congo-Burkina Faso 3-2
20.06.04 Ghana-South Africa 3-0
03.07.04 Cape Verde Is-DR Congo 1-1
03.07.04 South Africa-Burkina Faso 2-0
03.07.04 Uganda-Ghana 1-1
04.09.04 Burkina Faso-Uganda 2-0
05.09.04 DR Congo-South Africa 1-0
05.09.04 Ghana-Cape Verde Is 2-0
09.10.04 Cape Verde Is-Burkina Faso 1-0
10.10.04 Ghana-DR Congo 0-0
10.10.04 Uganda-South Africa 0-1
26.03.05 Burkina Faso-Cape Verde Is 1-2
26.03.05 South Africa-Uganda 2-1
27.03.05 DR Congo-Ghana 1-1
04.06.05 Cape Verde Is-South Africa 1-2
05.06.05 DR Congo-Uganda 4-0
05.06.05 Ghana-Burkina Faso 2-1
18.06.05 Burkina Faso-DR Congo 2-0
18.06.05 South Africa-Ghana 0-2
18.06.05 Uganda-Cape Verde Is 1-0
03.09.05 Burkina Faso-South Africa
04.09.05 DR Congo-Cape Verde Is
04.09.05 Ghana-Uganda
07.10.05 Cape Verde Is-Ghana
07.10.05 South Africa-DR Congo
07.10.05 Uganda-Burkina Faso

Group 3

Aug 17 - Omdurman
Sudan 1 (Tambal 20)
Benin 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Maillet (Sey)
Sudan: Elmuez Abdalla - Bakhebt, Lado, K Ali, Agab Sido (Amari 82), Aladin, Karar, B Abdalla, El-Bashir (Hado 70), Damar, Tambal (Ibrahim 88).
Benin: R Chitou - C Chitou, Hountonto, Moussa, Olou, Nassirou, Omotoyossi (Toclomiti 54), S Tchmogo, Corea, Amoussou, Agbessi (Babatunde 74).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ivory Coast	8	6	1	1	15	3	19
Cameroon	8	5	2	1	14	7	17
Egypt	8	4	1	3	21	13	13
Libya	8	3	2	3	8	9	11
Sudan	8	1	2	5	5	19	5
Benin	8	0	2	6	7	19	2

06.06.04 Cameroon-Benin 2-1
06.06.04 Ivory Coast-Libya 2-0
06.06.04 Sudan-Egypt 0-3
18.06.04 Libya-Cameroon 0-0
20.06.04 Benin-Sudan 1-1
20.06.04 Egypt-Ivory Coast 1-2
03.07.04 Sudan-Libya 0-1
04.07.04 Benin-Egypt 3-3
04.07.04 Cameroon-Ivory Coast 2-0
03.09.04 Libya-Benin 4-1
05.09.04 Egypt-Cameroon 3-2
05.09.04 Ivory Coast-Sudan 5-0
08.10.04 Libya-Egypt 2-1
09.10.04 Sudan-Cameroon 1-1
10.10.04 Benin-Ivory Coast 0-1
27.03.05 Cameroon-Sudan 2-1
27.03.05 Egypt-Libya 4-1
27.03.05 Ivory Coast-Benin 3-0
03.06.05 Libya-Ivory Coast 0-0
04.06.05 Benin-Cameroon 1-4
05.06.05 Egypt-Sudan 6-1
19.06.05 Cameroon-Libya 1-0
19.06.05 Ivory Coast-Egypt 2-0
17.08.05 Sudan-Benin 1-0
02.09.05 Libya-Sudan
04.09.05 Egypt-Benin
04.09.05 Ivory Coast-Cameroon
07.10.05 Benin-Libya
07.10.05 Cameroon-Egypt
07.10.05 Sudan-Ivory Coast

Group 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Angola	8	4	3	1	8	6	15
Nigeria	8	4	3	1	11	4	15
Zimbabwe	8	3	3	2	9	8	12
Gabon	8	2	3	3	11	10	9
Algeria	8	1	4	3	6	10	7
Rwanda	8	1	2	5	5	12	5

05.06.04 Algeria-Angola 0-0
05.06.04 Gabon-Zimbabwe 1-1
05.06.04 Nigeria-Rwanda 2-0
19.06.04 Rwanda-Gabon 3-1
20.06.04 Angola-Nigeria 1-0
20.06.04 Zimbabwe-Algeria 1-1
03.07.04 Gabon-Angola 2-2
03.07.04 Nigeria-Algeria 1-0
03.07.04 Rwanda-Zimbabwe 0-2
03.09.04 Zimbabwe-Nigeria 0-3
05.09.04 Algeria-Gabon 0-3
05.09.04 Angola-Rwanda 1-0
09.10.04 Gabon-Nigeria 1-1
09.10.04 Rwanda-Algeria 1-1
10.10.04 Angola-Zimbabwe 1-0
26.03.05 Nigeria-Gabon 2-0
27.03.05 Algeria-Rwanda 1-0
27.03.05 Zimbabwe-Angola 2-0
05.06.05 Angola-Algeria 2-1
05.06.05 Rwanda-Nigeria 1-1
05.06.05 Zimbabwe-Gabon 1-0
18.06.05 Gabon-Rwanda 3-0
18.06.05 Nigeria-Angola 1-1
19.06.05 Algeria-Zimbabwe 2-2
04.09.05 Algeria-Nigeria
04.09.05 Angola-Gabon
04.09.05 Zimbabwe-Rwanda
07.10.05 Gabon-Algeria
07.10.05 Nigeria-Zimbabwe
07.10.05 Rwanda-Angola

Group 5

Aug 17 - Tunis
Tunisia 1 (Guemamdia 2)
Kenya 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Evehe (Cam)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - H Trabelsi, Hagui, Jaidi, Clayton, Mnari, Chedli, Bouazizi, Ghodhbane (Jomaa 59), Guemamdia (Benachour 62), Santos (Zitouni 83).
Kenya: A Otieno - Mukenya, Amanaka, Shaban, Orodi, Mulama, Abdalla, Mwalala (Barasa 62), Mambo, Sirengo, Mariaga.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia	8	5	2	1	21	7	17
Morocco	8	4	4	0	14	5	16
Guinea	8	3	2	3	10	8	11
Kenya	8	3	1	4	8	12	10
Botswana	8	3	0	5	9	15	9
Malawi	8	0	3	5	8	23	3

05.06.04 Malawi-Morocco 1-1
05.06.04 Tunisia-Botswana 4-1
19.06.04 Botswana-Malawi 2-0
20.06.04 Guinea-Tunisia 2-1
03.07.04 Botswana-Morocco 0-1
03.07.04 Malawi-Guinea 1-1
04.09.04 Kenya-Malawi 3-2
04.09.04 Morocco-Tunisia 1-1
05.09.04 Guinea-Botswana 4-0
09.10.04 Botswana-Kenya 2-1
09.10.04 Malawi-Tunisia 2-2
10.10.04 Guinea-Morocco 1-1
17.11.04 Kenya-Guinea 2-1
09.02.05 Morocco-Kenya 5-1
26.03.05 Kenya-Botswana 1-0
26.03.05 Morocco-Guinea 1-0
26.03.05 Tunisia-Malawi 7-0
04.06.05 Botswana-Tunisia 1-3
04.06.05 Morocco-Malawi 4-1
05.06.05 Guinea-Kenya 1-0
11.06.05 Tunisia-Guinea 2-0
18.06.05 Kenya-Morocco 0-0
18.06.05 Malawi-Botswana 1-3
17.08.05 Tunisia-Kenya 1-0
03.09.05 Kenya-Tunisia
03.09.05 Morocco-Botswana
04.09.05 Guinea-Malawi
07.10.05 Malawi-Kenya
07.10.05 Tunisia-Morocco
07.10.05 Botswana-Guinea

Group winners qualify for finals

ASIA

4.5 finals berths

2nd stage

Group A

Aug 17 - Seoul
South Korea 0
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al-Anbar 4)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 61,586. **Ref:** Kunsuta (Tha)
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - You Kyoung-youl, Kim Jin-kyu, Kim Dong-jin, Kim Young-chul, Lee Young-pyo, Baek Ji-hoon (Kim Jung-woo 60), Cha Doo-ri (Chung Kyung-ho 55), Park Chu-young, Kim Do-heon (Cho Jae-jin 75), Ahn Jung-hwan. *Sent off: Kim Dong-jin 75min.*
Saudi Arabia: Zaid - Fallatha, Al-Qadi, Al-Meshal (Al-Jassam 57), Al-Abdullah (Jahdali 90), Al-Bahri, Al-Thaker, Al-Saqri, Al-Mowalad, Haidar (Majrashi 70), Al-Anbar.

Aug 17 - Tashkent
Uzbekistan 3 (Djeparov pen 41, Shatskikh 51, Soliev 76)
Kuwait 2 (Al-Mutawa 15, B Abdullah 30)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Mohd Salleh (Mly)
Uzbekistan: Safonov - Kasimov, Alikulov, Davletov (Bikmoev 52), Karpenko (Kiryan 83), Nikolaev, Kadadaze, Shirshov, Djeparov, Geinrikh (Soliev 46), Shatskikh.
Kuwait: Kankune - Y Abdullah, N Al-Shammari, Jarragh, K Al-Shammari, Al-Mutawa, Al-Shuwaye, Al-Hamad (H Al-Shammari 59), Al-Ataiqi, Zadah (Al-Azemi 82), B Abdullah.

GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saudi Arabia	6	4	2	0	10	1	14
South Korea	6	3	1	2	9	5	10
Uzbekistan	6	1	2	3	7	11	5
Kuwait	6	1	1	4	4	13	4

09.02.05 South Korea-Kuwait 2-0
09.02.05 Uzbekistan-Saudi Arabia 1-1
25.03.05 Kuwait-Uzbekistan 2-1
25.03.05 Saudi Arabia-South Korea 2-0
30.03.05 Kuwait-Saudi Arabia 0-0
30.03.05 South Korea-Uzbekistan 2-1
03.06.05 Saudi Arabia-Kuwait 3-0
03.06.05 Uzbekistan-South Korea 1-1
08.06.05 Kuwait-South Korea 0-4
08.06.05 Saudi Arabia-Uzbekistan 3-0
17.08.05 South Korea-Saudi Arabia 0-1
17.08.05 Uzbekistan-Kuwait 3-2

Group B

Aug 17 - Manama
Bahrain 2 (Isa 49, H Ahmed 54)
North Korea 3 (Choe Chol-man 28, Kim Chol-ho 43, An Chol-hyok 89)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Maidin (Sin)
Bahrain: H Ali - Moshkhas (Al-Hujairi 88), T Mohamed, Isa, Farhan, A Mohamed (S Mohamed 68), Norooz, M Hubail, H Ahmed, Makki (Salmeen 46), Basheer.
North Korea: Kim Myong-gil - Hwang Myong-chol, So Hyok-chol, Kim Chol-ho (Ri Yong-gwang 86), Han Song-chol, Kim Song-chol, An Chol-hyok, Pak Chol-jin, Han Sun-li, Kim Yong-jun (An Jong-ho 76), Choe Chol-man (Kim Myong-chol 29).

Aug 17 - Yokohama
Japan 2 (Kaji 28, Oguro 76)
Iran 1 (Daei 79)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 66,098. **Ref:** Shaban (Kuw)
Japan: Kawaguchi - Tanaka, Miyamoto, Endo (Konno 84), Alex, Fukunishi, Tamada (Abe 88), Nakazawa, Ogasawara, Kaji, Oguro.
Iran: Mirzapour - Golmohammadi, Nekounam, Kaebi, Alavi, Kameli-Mofrad, Nosrati, Vahedinikbakht (Maniei 73), Jabari (Mobali 46), Daei, Borhani (Kazemeyan 46).

GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Japan	6	5	0	1	9	4	15
Iran	6	4	1	1	7	3	13
Bahrain	6	1	1	4	4	7	4
North Korea	6	1	0	5	5	11	3

09.02.05 Bahrain-Iran 0-0
09.02.05 Japan-North Korea 2-1
25.03.05 Iran-Japan 2-1
25.03.05 North Korea-Bahrain 1-2
30.03.05 Japan-Bahrain 1-0
30.03.05 North Korea-Iran 0-2
03.06.05 Iran-North Korea 1-0
03.06.05 Bahrain-Japan 0-1
08.06.05 Iran-Bahrain 1-0
08.06.05 North Korea-Japan 0-2
17.08.05 Bahrain-North Korea 2-3
17.08.05 Japan-Iran 2-1

Group winners and runners-up qualify for finals. The two third-placed teams enter the Asian play-off

Asian play-off

03.09.05 Uzbekistan-Bahrain
07.09.05 Bahrain-Uzbekistan

Winners meet the fourth-placed CONCACAF team over two legs for a place in finals

CONCACAF

3.5 finals berths

3rd stage

Aug 17 - Guatemala City
Guatemala 2 (Baloy og 70, Romero 90)
Panama 1 (Jorge Dely Valdes 19)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 24,000. **Ref:** Sibrian (ElS)
Guatemala: Klee - Melgar, Sanabria, Plata (Davila 77), E Ponciano, Romero, Figueroa (Thompson 46), S Ponciano, Giron (Villatoro 67), Garcia, Ruiz.
Panama: Penedo - Rivera, J A Torres, Moreno (R Torres 72), Mitre, Blanco, Tejada (Brown 76), Medina, Phillips, Baloy, Jorge Dely Valdes (Rodriguez 60). *Sent off: Medina 47min.*

Aug 17 - Mexico City
Mexico 2 (Borgetti 62, Fonseca 85)
Costa Rica 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 70,000. **Ref:** Pineda (Hnd)
Mexico: O Sanchez - F Rodriguez, Osorio, Marquez (Pineda 60), Salcido, Pardo, Torrado (R Morales 46), G Galindo, Naelson (Bravo 63), Fonseca, Borgetti.
Costa Rica: Porras - Drummond, G Martinez, Cordero (Soto 68), Umana, D Fonseca, Centeno, L Gonzalez, Gomez, Bolanos (Rojas 75), Wanchope.

Aug 17 - Hartford
United States 1 (McBride 2)
Trinidad & Tobago 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,488. **Ref:** Rodriguez (Mex)
United States: Keller - Albright, Onyewu, Berhalter, Lewis, Ralston (Quaranta 72), Reyna, O'Brien (Armas 46), Convey, Donovan, McBride (Twellman 83). *Sent off: Convey 88min.*
Trinidad & Tobago: Jack - A John, M Andrews, Charles (Sealy 46), Lawrence, Whitley, Spann, Birchall, Samuel (Sancho 46), Yorke, S John (Jones 55). *Sent off: Lawrence 41min.*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mexico	6	5	1	0	11	3	16
United States	6	5	0	1	12	3	15
Costa Rica	6	2	1	3	6	10	7
Guatemala	6	2	1	3	9	9	7
Trinidad & Tob	6	1	1	4	4	10	4
Panama	6	0	2	4	3	10	2

09.02.05 Costa Rica-Mexico 1-2
09.02.05 Panama-Guatemala 0-0
09.02.05 Trinidad & Tob-United States..... 1-2
26.03.05 Costa Rica-Panama 2-1
26.03.05 Guatemala-Trinidad & Tob..... 5-1
27.03.05 Mexico-United States 2-1
30.03.05 Panama-Mexico..... 1-1
30.03.05 Trinidad & Tob-Costa Rica..... 0-0
30.03.05 United States-Guatemala..... 2-0
04.06.05 Guatemala-Mexico..... 0-2
04.06.05 Trinidad & Tob-Panama..... 2-0
04.06.05 United States-Costa Rica..... 3-0
08.06.05 Costa Rica-Guatemala 3-2
08.06.05 Mexico-Trinidad & Tob 2-0
08.06.05 Panama-United States..... 0-3
17.08.05 Guatemala-Panama 2-1
17.08.05 Mexico-Costa Rica..... 2-0
17.08.05 United States-Trinidad & Tob ... 1-0
03.09.05 Panama-Costa Rica
03.09.05 Trinidad & Tob-Guatemala
03.09.05 United States-Mexico
07.09.05 Costa Rica-Trinidad & Tob
07.09.05 Guatemala-United States
07.09.05 Mexico-Panama
08.10.05 Costa Rica-United States
08.10.05 Mexico-Guatemala
08.10.05 Panama-Trinidad & Tob
12.10.05 Guatemala-Costa Rica
12.10.05 Trinidad & Tob-Mexico
12.10.05 United States-Panama

Top three qualify for finals. The fourth-placed team meet the winners of the Asian play-off over two legs for a place in finals

EUROPE

14 finals berths (including hosts Germany, who qualify automatically)

Group 1

Aug 17 - Skopje
Macedonia 0
Finland 3 (Eremenko 8, 45, Roiha 87)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 6,800. **Ref:** Messias (Eng)
Macedonia: Madzovski - G Popov, Sedloski, A Mitreski, Noveski, Sumulikoski, Nuhiji (Grozdanovski 57), Petrov, Maznov, Vasoski (R Popov 65), Pandev (Nalimi 32).
Finland: Jaaskelainen - Pasanen, Hyypia, Tihinen, Kallio, Heikkinen, Tainio, Lagerblom (Litmanen 79), Eremenko (Saarinen 84), S Kuqi, Forssell (Roiha 61).

Aug 17 - Constanta
Romania 2 (Mutu 29, 41)
Andorra 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Jakov (Isr)
Romania: Lobont - Contra, Tamas, Chivu, Rat (Pascovici 80), F Petre (Balan 76), Cocis, D Munteanu (Tararache 46), Dica, Mutu, Niculescu.
Andorra: Koldo - Ayala, Silva, I Lima, Sonejee, Escura (Martin 46), Rodriguez (Garcia 90), Pujol, Sivera, Bernaus, Riera (Moreno 81).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland	8	7	1	0	20	3	22
Czech Republic	8	7	0	1	28	7	21
Romania	10	6	1	3	17	10	19
Finland	8	4	0	4	16	14	12
Macedonia	10	2	2	6	10	19	8
Armenia	9	1	1	7	5	20	4
Andorra	9	1	1	7	4	27	4

18.08.04 Macedonia-Armenia 3-0
18.08.04 Romania-Finland 2-1
04.09.04 Finland-Andorra..... 3-0
04.09.04 Romania-Macedonia..... 2-1
08.09.04 Andorra-Romania..... 1-5
08.09.04 Armenia-Finland..... 0-2
08.09.04 Holland-Czech Republic..... 2-0
09.10.04 Czech Republic-Romania..... 1-0
09.10.04 Finland-Armenia..... 3-1
09.10.04 Macedonia-Holland..... 2-2
13.10.04 Andorra-Macedonia 1-0
13.10.04 Armenia-Czech Republic 0-3
13.10.04 Holland-Finland 3-1
17.11.04 Andorra-Holland..... 0-3
17.11.04 Armenia-Romania..... 1-1
17.11.04 Macedonia-Czech Republic 0-2
09.02.05 Macedonia-Andorra 0-0
26.03.05 Armenia-Andorra 2-1
26.03.05 Czech Republic-Finland 4-3
26.03.05 Romania-Holland..... 0-2
30.03.05 Andorra-Czech Republic 0-4
30.03.05 Holland-Armenia..... 2-0
30.03.05 Macedonia-Romania..... 1-2
04.06.05 Armenia-Macedonia 1-2
04.06.05 Czech Republic-Andorra 8-1
04.06.05 Holland-Romania 2-0
08.06.05 Czech Republic-Macedonia 6-1
08.06.05 Finland-Holland 0-4
08.06.05 Romania-Armenia..... 3-0
17.08.05 Macedonia-Finland 0-3
17.08.05 Romania-Andorra..... 2-0
03.09.05 Andorra-Finland
03.09.05 Armenia-Holland
03.09.05 Romania-Czech Republic
07.09.05 Czech Republic-Armenia
07.09.05 Finland-Macedonia
07.09.05 Holland-Andorra
08.10.05 Czech Republic-Holland
08.10.05 Finland-Romania
12.10.05 Andorra-Armenia
12.10.05 Finland-Czech Republic
12.10.05 Holland-Macedonia

Group 2

Aug 17 - Almaty
Kazakhstan 1 (Kenzhekhanov 23)
Georgia 2 (Demetradze 50, 82)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 9,000. **Ref:** Havrilla (Slk)
Kazakhstan: Loriya - Kuchma, Baizhanov, Kenzhekhanov (Krokhmal 65), Familtsev, Larin (Chichulin 82), Zhumaskaliyev, Azovskiy (Nizovtsev 58), Irismetov, Travin, Khohlov.
Georgia: Lomaia - Menteshashvili, Kaladze, Kankava, Gakhokidze, Khizanishvili, Aladashvili (Odikadze 78), Tskitishvili, Kobiashvili, Demetradze (Ganugrava 90), A Iashvili (Mujiri 67).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ukraine	9	7	2	0	15	3	23
Turkey	9	4	4	1	19	7	16
Greece	9	4	3	2	12	7	15
Denmark	8	3	3	2	13	8	12
Albania	9	3	0	6	7	16	9
Georgia	8	2	2	4	12	17	8
Kazakhstan	8	0	0	8	3	23	0

04.09.04 Albania-Greece 2-1
04.09.04 Denmark-Ukraine 1-1
04.09.04 Turkey-Georgia 1-1
08.09.04 Georgia-Albania 2-0
08.09.04 Greece-Turkey 0-0
08.09.04 Kazakhstan-Ukraine 1-2
09.10.04 Albania-Denmark..... 0-2
09.10.04 Turkey-Kazakhstan 4-0
09.10.04 Ukraine-Greece..... 1-1
13.10.04 Denmark-Turkey 1-1
13.10.04 Kazakhstan-Albania..... 0-1
13.10.04 Ukraine-Georgia..... 2-0
17.11.04 Georgia-Denmark 2-2
17.11.04 Greece-Kazakhstan..... 3-1
17.11.04 Turkey-Ukraine 0-3
09.02.05 Albania-Ukraine 0-2
09.02.05 Greece-Denmark..... 2-1
26.03.05 Denmark-Kazakhstan 3-0
26.03.05 Georgia-Greece..... 1-3
26.03.05 Turkey-Albania..... 2-0
30.03.05 Georgia-Turkey 2-5
30.03.05 Greece-Albania 2-0
30.03.05 Ukraine-Denmark 1-0
04.06.05 Albania-Georgia 3-2
04.06.05 Turkey-Greece 0-0
04.06.05 Ukraine-Kazakhstan 2-0
08.06.05 Denmark-Albania..... 3-1
08.06.05 Greece-Ukraine..... 0-1
08.06.05 Kazakhstan-Turkey 0-6
17.08.05 Kazakhstan-Georgia 1-2
03.09.05 Albania-Kazakhstan
03.09.05 Georgia-Ukraine
03.09.05 Turkey-Denmark
07.09.05 Denmark-Georgia
07.09.05 Kazakhstan-Greece
07.09.05 Ukraine-Turkey
08.10.05 Denmark-Greece
08.10.05 Georgia-Kazakhstan
08.10.05 Ukraine-Albania
12.10.05 Albania-Turkey
12.10.05 Greece-Georgia
12.10.05 Kazakhstan-Denmark

Group 3

Aug 17 - Riga
Latvia 1 (Astafjevs 6)
Russia 1 (Arshavin 24)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
Latvia: Kolinko - Stepanovs, Smirnovs, Laizans, Astafjevs, Zirnis, Bleidelis, Korablovs, Rubins, Verpakovskis, Rimkus (Prohorenkovs 76).
Russia: Akinfeev - A Berezutsky, Evseev, Ignashevich, Sennikov, Aldonin, Karyaka (V Bystrov 59), Khokhlov (Semshov 67), Bilyaletdinov (Kirichenko 84), Arshavin, Kerzhakov.

Aug 17 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 0
Slovakia 0
Att: 1,150. **Ref:** Layec (Fra)
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Telser, M Buchel, Wolfinger, Martin Stocklasa, Michael Stocklasa (Ritzberger 89), Vogt (D Frick 75), R Beck, R Buchel, T Beck, Rohrer (Alabor 65).
Slovakia: Contofalsky - Gresko (Slovak 80), Kratochvil, Hlinka (Sninsky 46), Karhan, Zabavnik, Kisel, Jakubko (Reiter 46), Mintal, Had, Vittek.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	8	6	2	0	24	4	20
Slovakia	9	5	3	1	22	7	18
Russia	8	4	3	1	16	11	15
Latvia	9	4	2	3	16	15	14
Estonia	9	3	2	4	12	15	11
Liechtenstein	9	1	2	6	9	19	5
Luxembourg	8	0	0	8	4	32	0

18.08.04 Liechtenstein-Estonia 1-2
18.08.04 Slovakia-Luxembourg..... 3-1
04.09.04 Estonia-Luxembourg..... 4-0
04.09.04 Latvia-Portugal 0-2
04.09.04 Russia-Slovakia 1-1
08.09.04 Luxembourg-Latvia..... 3-4
08.09.04 Portugal-Estonia 4-0
08.09.04 Slovakia-Liechtenstein 7-0
09.10.04 Liechtenstein-Portugal 2-2
09.10.04 Luxembourg-Russia..... 0-4
09.10.04 Slovakia-Latvia 4-1
13.10.04 Latvia-Estonia..... 2-2
13.10.04 Luxembourg-Liechtenstein..... 0-4
13.10.04 Portugal-Russia 7-1
17.11.04 Liechtenstein-Latvia 1-3
17.11.04 Luxembourg-Portugal 0-5
17.11.04 Russia-Estonia..... 4-0
26.03.05 Estonia-Slovakia 1-2
26.03.05 Liechtenstein-Russia 1-2
30.03.05 Estonia-Russia..... 1-1
30.03.05 Latvia-Luxembourg..... 4-0
30.03.05 Slovakia-Portugal 1-1
04.06.05 Estonia-Liechtenstein 2-0
04.06.05 Portugal-Slovakia 2-0
04.06.05 Russia-Latvia..... 2-0
08.06.05 Estonia-Portugal 0-1
08.06.05 Latvia-Liechtenstein 1-0
08.06.05 Luxembourg-Slovakia 0-4
17.08.05 Latvia-Russia..... 1-1
17.08.05 Liechtenstein-Slovakia 0-0
03.09.05 Estonia-Latvia
03.09.05 Portugal-Luxembourg
03.09.05 Russia-Liechtenstein
07.09.05 Latvia-Slovakia
07.09.05 Liechtenstein-Luxembourg
07.09.05 Russia-Portugal
08.10.05 Portugal-Liechtenstein
08.10.05 Russia-Luxembourg
08.10.05 Slovakia-Estonia
12.10.05 Luxembourg-Estonia
12.10.05 Portugal-Latvia
12.10.05 Slovakia-Russia

Group 4

Aug 17 - Toftir
Faroe Islands 0
Cyprus 3 (M Constantinou 39, pen 77, Krassas 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,720. **Ref:** Johannesson (Swe)
Faroe Islands: Knudsen - Olsen (Horg 15), Atli Danielsen, Jon R Jacobsen, R Jacobsen, Johan Hansen (Lakjuni 79), Jorgensen, O Johannesen, av Flotum, a Borg, T Jonsson (C Jacobsen 46).
Cyprus: Morphis - Theodotou (E Charalambous 81), Makrides, C Michael, Louka, Garpozis (Okkarides 63), Eleftheriou, Krassas, Charalambidis, Okkas, M Constantinou (Yiasoumi 88). *Sent off: Eleftheriou 45min.*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rep Ireland	7	3	4	0	11	4	13
Switzerland	6	3	3	0	13	4	12
Israel	7	2	5	0	10	8	11
France	6	2	4	0	5	1	10
Cyprus	7	1	1	5	7	12	4
Faroe Islands	7	0	1	6	3	20	1

04.09.04 France-Israel 0-0
04.09.04 Rep Ireland-Cyprus..... 3-0
04.09.04 Switzerland-Faroe Islands..... 6-0
08.09.04 Faroe Islands-France..... 0-2
08.09.04 Israel-Cyprus 2-1
08.09.04 Switzerland-Rep Ireland..... 1-1
09.10.04 Cyprus-Faroe Islands..... 2-2
09.10.04 France-Rep Ireland..... 0-0
09.10.04 Israel-Switzerland..... 2-2
13.10.04 Cyprus-France 0-2
13.10.04 Rep Ireland-Faroe Islands..... 2-0
17.11.04 Cyprus-Israel 1-2
26.03.05 France-Switzerland 0-0
26.03.05 Israel-Rep Ireland 1-1
30.03.05 Israel-France 1-1
30.03.05 Switzerland-Cyprus 1-0
04.06.05 Faroe Islands-Switzerland..... 1-3
04.06.05 Rep Ireland-Israel 2-2
08.06.05 Faroe Islands-Rep Ireland..... 0-2
17.08.05 Faroe Islands-Cyprus..... 0-3
03.09.05 France-Faroe Islands
03.09.05 Switzerland-Israel
07.09.05 Cyprus-Switzerland
07.09.05 Faroe Islands-Israel
07.09.05 Rep Ireland-France
08.10.05 Cyprus-Rep Ireland
08.10.05 Switzerland-France
08.10.05 Israel-Faroe Islands
12.10.05 France-Cyprus
12.10.05 Rep Ireland-Switzerland

Group 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	6	4	1	1	9	5	13
Norway	6	2	3	1	6	3	9
Slovenia	6	2	3	1	6	5	9
Belarus	6	1	4	1	10	7	7
Scotland	6	1	3	2	3	4	6
Moldova	6	0	2	4	1	11	2

04.09.04 Italy-Norway 2-1
04.09.04 Slovenia-Moldova 3-0
08.09.04 Moldova-Italy 0-1
08.09.04 Norway-Belarus 1-1
08.09.04 Scotland-Slovenia..... 0-0
09.10.04 Belarus-Moldova..... 4-0
09.10.04 Scotland-Norway 0-1
09.10.04 Slovenia-Italy 1-0
13.10.04 Italy-Belarus 4-3
13.10.04 Moldova-Scotland..... 1-1
13.10.04 Norway-Slovenia..... 3-0
26.03.05 Italy-Scotland..... 2-0
30.03.05 Moldova-Norway..... 0-0
30.03.05 Slovenia-Belarus..... 1-1
04.06.05 Belarus-Slovenia..... 1-1
04.06.05 Norway-Italy 0-0
04.06.05 Scotland-Moldova 2-0
08.06.05 Belarus-Scotland 0-0
03.09.05 Moldova-Belarus
03.09.05 Scotland-Italy
03.09.05 Slovenia-Norway
07.09.05 Belarus-Italy
07.09.05 Moldova-Slovenia
07.09.05 Norway-Scotland
08.10.05 Italy-Slovenia
08.10.05 Norway-Moldova
08.10.05 Scotland-Belarus
12.10.05 Belarus-Norway
12.10.05 Italy-Moldova
12.10.05 Slovenia-Scotland

Group 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Poland	7	6	0	1	22	5	18
England	6	5	1	0	13	3	16
Austria	6	3	2	1	11	8	11
N Ireland	6	0	3	3	5	13	3
Wales	6	0	2	4	5	11	2
Azerbaijan	7	0	2	5	1	17	2

04.09.04 Austria-England ... 2-2
04.09.04 Azerbaijan-Wales ... 1-1
04.09.04 Northern Ireland-Poland ... 0-3
08.09.04 Austria-Azerbaijan ... 2-0
08.09.04 Poland-England ... 1-2
08.09.04 Wales-Northern Ireland ... 2-2
09.10.04 Austria-Poland ... 1-3
09.10.04 Azerbaijan-Northern Ireland ... 0-0
09.10.04 England-Wales ... 2-0
13.10.04 Azerbaijan-England ... 0-1
13.10.04 Northern Ireland-Austria ... 3-3
13.10.04 Wales-Poland ... 2-3
26.03.05 England-Northern Ireland ... 4-0
26.03.05 Poland-Azerbaijan ... 8-0
26.03.05 Wales-Austria ... 0-2
30.03.05 Austria-Wales ... 1-0
30.03.05 England-Azerbaijan ... 2-0
30.03.05 Poland-Northern Ireland ... 1-0
04.06.05 Azerbaijan-Poland ... 0-3
03.09.05 Northern Ireland-Azerbaijan
03.09.05 Poland-Austria
03.09.05 Wales-England
07.09.05 Azerbaijan-Austria
07.09.05 Northern Ireland-England
07.09.05 Poland-Wales
08.10.05 England-Austria
08.10.05 Northern Ireland-Wales
12.10.05 Austria-Northern Ireland
12.10.05 England-Poland
12.10.05 Wales-Azerbaijan

Group 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	7	3	4	0	10	2	13
Serbia & M'gro	6	3	3	0	10	0	12
Lithuania	6	2	3	1	7	3	9
Belgium	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Bosnia-Herz	6	1	4	1	7	8	7
San Marino	7	0	0	7	2	23	0

04.09.04 Belgium-Lithuania ... 1-1
04.09.04 San Marino-Serbia & M'negro ... 0-3
08.09.04 Bosnia-Herz-Spain ... 1-1
08.09.04 Lithuania-San Marino ... 4-0
09.10.04 Bosnia-Herz-Serbia & M'negro ... 0-0
09.10.04 Spain-Belgium ... 2-0
13.10.04 Lithuania-Spain ... 0-0
13.10.04 Serbia & M'negro-San Marino ... 5-0
17.11.04 Belgium-Serbia & M'negro ... 0-2
17.11.04 San Marino-Lithuania ... 0-1
09.02.05 Spain-San Marino ... 5-0
26.03.05 Belgium-Bosnia-Herz ... 4-1
30.03.05 Bosnia-Herz-Lithuania ... 1-1
30.03.05 San Marino-Belgium ... 1-2
30.03.05 Serbia & M'negro-Spain ... 0-0
04.06.05 San Marino-Bosnia-Herz ... 1-3
04.06.05 Serbia & M'negro-Belgium ... 0-0
04.06.05 Spain-Lithuania ... 1-0
08.06.05 Spain-Bosnia-Herz ... 1-1
03.09.05 Bosnia-Herz-Belgium
03.09.05 Serbia & M'negro-Lithuania
07.09.05 Belgium-San Marino
07.09.05 Lithuania-Bosnia-Herz
07.09.05 Spain-Serbia & M'negro
08.10.05 Belgium-Spain
08.10.05 Bosnia-Herz-San Marino
08.10.05 Lithuania-Serbia & M'negro
12.10.05 Lithuania-Belgium
12.10.05 San Marino-Spain
12.10.05 Serbia & M'negro-Bosnia-Herz

Group 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Croatia	6	5	1	0	16	3	16
Sweden	6	5	0	1	23	2	15
Hungary	6	3	1	2	9	11	10
Bulgaria	6	2	2	2	11	11	8
Iceland	7	1	1	5	10	18	4
Malta	7	0	1	6	2	26	1

04.09.04 Croatia-Hungary ... 3-0
04.09.04 Iceland-Bulgaria ... 1-3
04.09.04 Malta-Sweden ... 0-7
08.09.04 Hungary-Iceland ... 3-2
08.09.04 Sweden-Croatia ... 0-1
09.10.04 Croatia-Bulgaria ... 2-2
09.10.04 Malta-Iceland ... 0-0
09.10.04 Sweden-Hungary ... 3-0
13.10.04 Bulgaria-Malta ... 4-1
13.10.04 Iceland-Sweden ... 1-4
17.11.04 Malta-Hungary ... 0-2
26.03.05 Bulgaria-Sweden ... 0-3
26.03.05 Croatia-Iceland ... 4-0
30.03.05 Croatia-Malta ... 3-0
30.03.05 Hungary-Bulgaria ... 1-1
04.06.05 Bulgaria-Croatia ... 1-3
04.06.05 Iceland-Hungary ... 2-3
04.06.05 Sweden-Malta ... 6-0
08.06.05 Iceland-Malta ... 4-1
03.09.05 Hungary-Malta
03.09.05 Iceland-Croatia
03.09.05 Sweden-Bulgaria
07.09.05 Bulgaria-Iceland
07.09.05 Hungary-Sweden
07.09.05 Malta-Croatia
08.10.05 Bulgaria-Hungary
08.10.05 Croatia-Sweden
12.10.05 Hungary-Croatia
12.10.05 Malta-Bulgaria
12.10.05 Sweden-Iceland

Group winners and the two best runners-up qualify for finals. The other six runners-up are paired in three two-leg play-off matches, the winners of which also qualify for finals*
**Group runners-up will be ranked according to their results against the teams finishing 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th in their respective groups*

European play-off matchdays:
November 12 (1st leg), November 16 (2nd leg), 2005

OCEANIA

0.5 finals berths

3rd stage

03.09.05 Australia-Solomon Islands
06.09.05 Solomon Islands-Australia

Winners meet the fifth-placed South American team over two legs for a place in finals

SOUTH AMERICA

4.5 finals berths

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina	15	9	4	2	27	15	31
Brazil	15	7	6	2	26	16	27
Ecuador	15	7	2	6	21	18	23
Paraguay	15	6	4	5	21	22	22
Colombia	15	5	5	5	20	12	20
Chile	15	5	5	5	17	16	20
Uruguay	15	4	6	5	19	26	18
Peru	15	3	6	6	15	21	15
Venezuela	15	4	3	8	16	23	15
Bolivia	15	4	1	10	17	30	13

06.09.03 Argentina-Chile ... 2-2
06.09.03 Ecuador-Venezuela ... 2-0
06.09.03 Peru-Paraguay ... 4-1
07.09.03 Colombia-Brazil ... 1-2
07.09.03 Uruguay-Bolivia ... 5-0
09.09.03 Chile-Peru ... 2-1
09.09.03 Venezuela-Argentina ... 0-3
10.09.03 Bolivia-Colombia ... 4-0
10.09.03 Brazil-Ecuador ... 1-0
10.09.03 Paraguay-Uruguay ... 4-1
15.11.03 Argentina-Bolivia ... 3-0
15.11.03 Colombia-Venezuela ... 0-1
15.11.03 Paraguay-Ecuador ... 2-1
15.11.03 Uruguay-Chile ... 2-1
16.11.03 Peru-Brazil ... 1-1
18.11.03 Chile-Paraguay ... 0-1
18.11.03 Venezuela-Bolivia ... 2-1
19.11.03 Brazil-Uruguay ... 3-3
19.11.03 Colombia-Argentina ... 1-1
19.11.03 Ecuador-Peru ... 0-0
30.03.04 Argentina-Ecuador ... 1-0
30.03.04 Bolivia-Chile ... 0-2
31.03.04 Paraguay-Brazil ... 0-0
31.03.04 Peru-Colombia ... 0-2
31.03.04 Uruguay-Venezuela ... 0-3
01.06.04 Bolivia-Paraguay ... 2-1
01.06.04 Uruguay-Peru ... 1-3
01.06.04 Venezuela-Chile ... 0-1
02.06.04 Brazil-Argentina ... 3-1
02.06.04 Ecuador-Colombia ... 2-1
05.06.04 Ecuador-Bolivia ... 3-2
06.06.04 Argentina-Paraguay ... 0-0
06.06.04 Chile-Brazil ... 1-1
06.06.04 Colombia-Uruguay ... 5-0
06.06.04 Peru-Venezuela ... 0-0
04.09.04 Peru-Argentina ... 1-3
05.09.04 Brazil-Bolivia ... 3-1
05.09.04 Chile-Colombia ... 0-0
05.09.04 Paraguay-Venezuela ... 1-0
05.09.04 Uruguay-Ecuador ... 1-0
09.10.04 Argentina-Uruguay ... 4-2
09.10.04 Bolivia-Peru ... 1-0
09.10.04 Colombia-Paraguay ... 1-1
09.10.04 Venezuela-Brazil ... 2-5
10.10.04 Ecuador-Chile ... 2-0
12.10.04 Bolivia-Uruguay ... 0-0
13.10.04 Brazil-Colombia ... 0-0
13.10.04 Chile-Argentina ... 0-0
13.10.04 Paraguay-Peru ... 1-1
14.10.04 Venezuela-Ecuador ... 3-1
17.11.04 Argentina-Venezuela ... 3-2
17.11.04 Colombia-Bolivia ... 1-0
17.11.04 Ecuador-Brazil ... 1-0
17.11.04 Peru-Chile ... 2-1
17.11.04 Uruguay-Paraguay ... 1-0
26.03.05 Bolivia-Argentina ... 1-2
26.03.05 Chile-Uruguay ... 1-1
26.03.05 Venezuela-Colombia ... 0-0
27.03.05 Brazil-Peru ... 1-0
27.03.05 Ecuador-Paraguay ... 5-2
29.03.05 Bolivia-Venezuela ... 3-1
30.03.05 Argentina-Colombia ... 1-0
30.03.05 Paraguay-Chile ... 2-1
30.03.05 Peru-Ecuador ... 2-2
30.03.05 Uruguay-Brazil ... 1-1
04.06.05 Chile-Bolivia ... 3-1
04.06.05 Colombia-Peru ... 5-0
04.06.05 Ecuador-Argentina ... 2-0
04.06.05 Venezuela-Uruguay ... 1-1
05.06.05 Brazil-Paraguay ... 4-1
07.06.05 Peru-Uruguay ... 0-0
08.06.05 Argentina-Brazil ... 3-1
08.06.05 Chile-Venezuela ... 2-1
08.06.05 Colombia-Ecuador ... 3-0
08.06.05 Paraguay-Bolivia ... 4-1
03.09.05 Bolivia-Ecuador
03.09.05 Paraguay-Argentina
03.09.05 Venezuela-Peru
04.09.05 Brazil-Chile
04.09.05 Uruguay-Colombia
08/09.10.05 Argentina-Peru
08/09.10.05 Bolivia-Brazil
08.10.05 Colombia-Chile
08.10.05 Venezuela-Paraguay
09.10.05 Ecuador-Uruguay
11/12.10.05 Brazil-Venezuela
11/12.10.05 Peru-Bolivia
11/12.10.05 Uruguay-Argentina
12.10.05 Chile-Ecuador
12.10.05 Paraguay-Colombia

Top four qualify for finals. Fifth-placed team meet the Oceania section winners over two legs for a place in finals

FINALS SCHEDULE

June 9, 2006	Opening match
June 24-27	Second round
June 30-July 1	Quarter-finals
July 4 & 5	Semi-finals
July 8	Third-place play-off
July 9	Final

Venues: Berlin, Cologne, Dortmund, Frankfurt, Gelsenkirchen, Hamburg, Hanover, Kaiserslautern, Leipzig, Munich, Nuremberg, Stuttgart.

INTERNATIONALS

Wednesday, August 3
Aug 3 - Manama - friendly
Bahrain 5 (Al-Marzouqi 7, Adnan 35, H Ali 63, Farhan pen 82, Al-Dakheel 84)
Turkmenistan 0
HT: 2-0
Sent off: Al-Marzouqi (Bahrain) 67min

Sunday, August 7
Aug 7 - Manama - friendly
Bahrain 2 (Adnan 27, H Ali 86)
Iraq 2 (Mahmoud 52, Naser 75)
HT: 1-0

Wednesday, August 10
Aug 10 - Johannesburg, South Africa - friendly
Botswana 0
Angola 0

Friday, August 12
Aug 12 - Lautoka - friendly
Fiji 1 (E Masi pen 14)
India 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Fox (NZ)
Fiji: Tamanisau - Dau, Avinesh, Vidovi, Turuva, Swamy, E Masi, Bukalidi (Waqa), Kumar (Daunisaka 88), Naika, Vulivuli (Vakatalesau 77).
India: Kumar - Irungbam S Singh, Fernandes, Pradeep, Shivananju, Tulunga, Sukhjinder Singh (Sukhwinder Singh 75), Venkatesh, Roy (Chakraborty), Pariyar, Manjit Singh (Chetri 64).

Saturday, August 13
Aug 13 - Limassol - friendly
Cyprus 2 (Yiasoumi 63, 79)
Iraq 1 (Mohammed Nassir 17)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 500
Cyprus: Morfis - Louka, Okkarides (A Constantinou 58), S Georghiou (Theodotou 53), E Charalambous (Makrides 46), N Nicolaou (Marangos 46), Eleftheriou (C Michael 46), Charalambidis, Garpozis, Yiasoumi, Aloneftis (G Nicolaou 63).
Iraq: Wisam Kasid - Basim Abbas, Ali Hussein, Ahmed Kadhim, Mahdi Karim, Haidar Abdul Amir (Khalid Musher 90), Nashat Akram, Haitham Kadhim, Hawar M Mohammed (Wisam Zaki 73), Mohammed Nassir (Nawaf Falah 90), Younis Mahmoud.

Sunday, August 14
Aug 14 - Suva - friendly
Fiji 2 (Vidovi 25, E Masi 61)
India 1 (Irungbam S Singh 10)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 11,000. **Ref:** O'Leary (NZ)
Fiji: Tamanisau - Dau, Avinesh, Vidovi, Turuva, Daunisaka, E Masi (Waqa), Baletoga (Bukalidi 65), S Kumar (Morrell), Naika (Swamy), Vakatalesau (Vulivuli 65).
India: Kumar - Irungbam S Singh, Fernandes, Pradeep, Mondal, Tulunga (Chakraborty), Venkatesh, Roy, Pariyar (Sukhwinder Singh), Chetri, Manjit Singh (Bose).

Aug 14 - Seoul - friendly
South Korea 3 (Chung Kyung-ho 34, Kim Jin-yong 36, Park Chu-young 68)
North Korea 0
HT: 2-0

Tuesday, August 16
Aug 16 - Paris - friendly
DR Congo 3 (Mbuta 37, Lua Lua 62, Madi 79)
Guinea 1 (I Bangoura 70)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Piccirillo (Fra)

Wednesday, August 17
Aug 17 - Tirana - friendly
Albania 2 (Bushi 37, Cana 72)
Azerbaijan 1 (Tagizade 2)
HT: 1-1
Albania: Hidi - Osmani, Hasi, Sina (Dallku 90), E Beqiri, Cana, Murati (Skela 46), Shkembi (Haxhi 46), Lala (Jupi 46), Bushi (Myrtaj 46), Kapllani (Bogdani 46).
Azerbaijan: Kramarenko - Sadigov (L Gurbanov 89), Shukurov (Hashimov 89), Amirbayev (R Guliev 90), Hajiyev, A Kerimov (I Gurbanov 87), Tagizade (Ismailov 76), M Gurbanov (Muzuka 72), Emin Guliev, Imamaliyev, G Gubanov.

Aug 17 - Lisbon - friendly
Angola 2 (Mantorras 46, Love 86)
Cape Verde Islands 1 (Lito 25)
HT: 0-1

Aug 17 - Graz - friendly
Austria 2 (Ibertsberger 83, Standfest 87)
Scotland 2 (K Miller 3, O'Connor 39)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 13,800. **Ref:** Dereli (Tur)
Austria: Payer (Schranz 46) - Dospel (Standfest 54), Ehman, Pogatetz, Gercaliu, Schopp (Ibertsberger 68), Kuhbauer (Saumel 78), Aufhauser, Ivanschitz, Mayrleb (Akagunduz 63), Vastic (Kuljic 63).
Scotland: Gordon (Douglas 46) - G Caldwell, Pressley, Webster (Anderson 46), McNamara, Dailly, O'Neill (Severin 46), Quashie (Hughes 73), G Alexander, K Miller (Riordan 46), O'Connor.

Aug 17 - Brussels - friendly
Belgium 2 (E Mpenza 19, M Mpenza 24)
Greece 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Berntsen (Nor)
Belgium: Proto - Deschacht, Kompany, Van Buyten, Van Damme (Leonard 89), Vanden Borre (Doll 87), Simons, Vanderhaeghe (Clement 89), E Mpenza (Geraerts 79), Pieroni (Bisconti 73), M Mpenza (Vandenbergh 75).
Greece: Nikopolidis - Kapsis, Kyrgiakos (N Limberopoulos 46), Basinas (Alexopoulos 46), Seitaridis, Fissas (Vyntra 71), Karagounis, Lakis (Vryzas 46), Zagorakis (Kafes 66), Haristeas, Giannakopoulos (Salpigidis 69).

Aug 17 - Sofia - friendly
Bulgaria 3 (Berbatov 24, 43, M Petrov 38)
Turkey 1 (Fatih Tekke 21)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Zografos (Gre)
Bulgaria: G Petkov - Kishishev, Tiago Silva, V Iliev (Tunchev 82), Georgiev (G Iliev 62), Yankov (Gargorov 62), Berbatov (Genkov 68), M Petrov (Koprivarov 68), Kamburov (Karaslavov 71), Topuzakov, Lazarov.
Turkey: Rustu - Bulent Korkmaz (Tolga 10), Deniz Baris, Emre (Koray Avci 27), Umit Ozat (Deniz Demirel 83), Hasan Sas, Mustafa Koray (Huseyin 80), Gokdeniz (Serkan 69), Hamit Altintop, Serhat, Fatih Tekke (Hakan Sukur 46).

Aug 17 - Split - friendly
Croatia 1 (Kranjcar 32)
Brazil 1 (Ricardinho 42)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Meyer (Ger)
Croatia: Butina (Pletikosa 61) - Tomas (Simic 46), R Kovac, Simunic, Srna, Tudor, N Kovac (Vranjes 87), Babic, Kranjcar (Seric 84), Klasnic (Balaban 77), Olic (Da Silva 51).
Brazil: Dida - Cafu, Lucio (Luisao 82), Juan, Roberto Carlos, Emerson, Ze Roberto (Renato 66), Ricardinho (Robinho 46), Kaka (Juninho Pernambucano 66), Ronaldo (Ricardo Oliveira 78), Adriano (Julio Baptista 78).

Aug 17 - Copenhagen - friendly
Denmark 4 (Rommedahl 60, Tomasson 63, Gravgaard 67, Larsen 90)
England 1 (Rooney 87)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 41,438. **Ref:** Ovrebo (Nor)
Denmark: Sorensen - Priske, Per Nielsen (Gravgaard 46), Agger, N Jensen, Gravesen, Poulsen (D Jensen 86), Gronkjaer (Rommedahl 46), C Jensen (Perez 72), Jorgensen (Kahlenberg 46), Tomasson (Larsen 64).
England: Robinson (James 46) - G Neville (G Johnson 46), Ferdinand, Terry (Carragher 46), A Cole, Beckham, Gerrard (Jenas 82), Lampard (Hargreaves 64), J Cole, Rooney, Defoe (Owen 46).

Aug 17 - Loja - friendly
Ecuador 3 (Borja 7, Lara 39, 67)
Venezuela 1 (Torrealba 70)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Vasco (Ecu)
Ecuador: Mora - Reasco, Guagua, G Espinoza (Campos 62), Ambrossi (Escobar 62), Urrutia (Castillo 58), M Ayovi, Mendez (Paredes 77), Lara (W Ayovi 68), Salas (Benitez 58), Borja (Calderon 71).
Venezuela: Dudamel (Toyo 46) - H Gonzalez, Vielma (Godoy 84), Rouga, Rojas, L Vera, M Mea Vitali (Fuenmayor 46), C Gonzalez (A Gonzalez 46), Torrealba, Maldonado (Boada 46), Moran.

Aug 17 - Tallinn - friendly
Estonia 1 (Viikmae 35)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Frojdfeldt (Swe)
Estonia: Kotenko - Enar Jaager, Stepanov, Piiroja, U Rooba (Smirnov 51), Leetma, Terehhov, Klavan (Saharov 79), Viikmae (Neemelo 72), Oper, Kruglov.
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Hasagic (Brasnic 82) - Berberovic (Gredic 63), Music, Spahic, Bajramovic, Vidic (Milenkovic 46), Bolic, Jakirevic, Barbarez, Grujic, Misimovic (Zeba 72).

Aug 17 - Montpellier - friendly
France 3 (Gallas 28, Zidane 62, Henry 66)
Ivory Coast 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 31,457. **Ref:** Bertini (Ita)
France: Coupet - Sagnol, Thuram (Squillaci 23), Boumsong, Gallas, Makelele (Diarra 89), Zidane, Dhorasoo, Wiltord (Trezeguet 80), Henry (Cisse 71), Malouda (Rothen 71).
Ivory Coast: Tizie - Zoro (Eboue 46), K Toure, C Domoraud, Boka, Yapi, Zokora (Demel 70), Tiene (Fae 46), B Kalou (Romaric 46), Dindane, Drogba (B Kone 78).

Aug 17 - London - friendly
Ghana 0
Senegal 0

Aug 17 - Rotterdam - friendly
Holland 2 (Robben 3, 46)
Germany 2 (Ballack 49, Asamoah 81)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 45,500. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Holland: Van der Sar - Kromkamp (Van der Vaart 46), Boulahrouz, Opdam, De Cler (Bouma 46), Landzaat, Maduro (Heitinga 52), Cocu, Robben, Van Nisteirooy (Makaay 46), Kuijt (Van Persie 46).
Germany: Kahn - Friedrich (Hinkel 74), Mertesacker (Huth 66), Worns, Schneider, Frings (Hitzlsperger 66), Hamann (Borowski 74), Ernst (Deisler 46), Ballack, Klose (Asamoah 46), Kuranyi.

Aug 17 - Budapest - friendly
Hungary 1 (Torghelle 29)
Argentina 2 (M Rodriguez 19, Heinze 62)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 27,000. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Hungary: Kiraly - Bodnar, Eger, Juhasz, Vanczak (N Toth 87), Boor (Kenesei 69), Takacs, Gera, Huszti, Halmosi (Priskin 69), Torghelle (Kerekes 69).
Argentina: Franco - Ayala, Sorin, Scaloni, Bernardi, Heinze, L Gonzalez (Zabaleta 82), M Rodriguez, D'Alessandro (Santana 90), Lopez (Messi 64), Crespo. *Sent off: Messi 65min.*

Aug 17 - Reykjavik - friendly
Iceland 4 (Steinsson 25, Vidarsson 42, Helguson 67, Gunnarson 73)
South Africa 1 (Buckley 28)
HT: 2-1

Aug 17 - Amman - friendly
Jordan 0
Armenia 0

Aug 17 - friendly
Libya 0
Nigeria 1
HT: 0-1

Aug 17 - Vilnius - friendly
Lithuania 1 (D Cesnauskis 45)
Belarus 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,500. **Ref:** Sipailo (Lat)
Lithuania: Karcemarskas - Barasa (Klimavicius 90), Skerla, Dziaukstas, Skarbalius (Paulauskas 89), D Cesnauskis (Savenas 81), Semberas, Danilevicius (Preiksaitis 46), E Cesnauskis, Poskus (Guscinas 46), Jankauskas (Mikoliunas 62).
Belarus: Zhaunou (Khomutovsky 46) - Yaskovich (Shkabara 39), Omelyanchuk, Shtanyuk, Gurenko, Lavrik (Kornilenko 46; V Hleb 75), Kovba, Bialkevich (Sashchenka 80), Bulyga (Kalachev 46), A Hleb, Kutuzov.

Aug 17 - Valletta - friendly
Malta 1 (Woods 35)
Northern Ireland 1 (Healy 9)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 1,850. **Ref:** Riley (Eng)
Malta: Haber - Pullicino (Ciantar 62), Dimech (Scicluna 62), Said, Wellman, Briffa, Agius (Mallia 74), Anonam, Woods, Mattocks (Zahra 79), Cohen (Sammut 86). *Sent off: Woods 77min.*
Northern Ireland: Taylor - Craigan, Hughes, Murdock, Gillespie, Johnson, Whitley (Jones 59), Davis (Mulryne 89), Elliott (Brunt 59), Healy, Quinn (Feeney 59). *Sent off: Gillespie 77min.*

Aug 17 - Rouen, France - friendly
Morocco 0
Togo 1 (Dogbe 20)
HT: 0-1

Aug 17 - Oslo - friendly
Norway 0
Switzerland 2 (Frei 50, Bergdolmo og 59)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 19,623. **Ref:** Vollquartz (Den)
Norway: Myhre - Bergdolmo, Hagen (Waehler 71), Lundekvam, Riise, Valencia (El Fakiri 88), Grindheim (E Bakke 46), Haestad, Gamst Pedersen, Carew (Arst 46), Iversen (Helstad 46).
Switzerland: Zuberbuhler - Degen, Muller, Senderos (Smiljanic 87), Magnin (Spycher 80), Cabanas (Gygax 46), Vogel, H Yakin, Barnetta, Frei (Lustrinelli 80), Streller (Vonlanthen 46).

Aug 17 - Ciudad del Este - friendly
Paraguay 3
El Salvador 0
HT: 2-0

Aug 17 - Tacna - friendly
Peru 3 (Vilchez 28, Guerrero 59, Villalta 64)
Chile 1 (Fuentes 37)
HT: 1-1

Aug 17 - Ponta Delgada - friendly
Portugal 2 (Fernando Meira 50, Helder Postiga 69)
Egypt 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Granat (Pol)
Portugal: Quim - Alex, Ricardo Carvalho, Jorge Andrade (Fernando Meira 46), Paulo Ferreira (Caneira 46), Petit (Joao Moutinho 46), Figo (Joao Alves 62), Tiago, Hugo Viana (Boa Morte 62), Helder Postiga, Pauleta (Ricardo Quaresma 46).
Egypt: N El-Sayed (El-Hadary 48) - Fathi, El-Nahhas, Gomaa, T El-Sayed (Azmy 72), Zaki, Ghali (Aboutraika 61), Abd Rabo, Shawki, Moteab, Hossam (Ali 80).

Aug 17 - Dublin - friendly
Republic of Ireland 1 (A Reid 32)
Italy 2 (Pirlo 10, Gilardino 31)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 44,000. **Ref:** Gomes Costa (Por)
Rep Ireland: Given - Finnan (Carr 57), Dunne (O'Brien 46), Cunningham, O'Shea (Miller 78), Holland (Harte 39), A Reid (Elliott 73), S Reid, Kilbane, Morrison, Duff.
Italy: Roma - Zaccardo, Nesta (Materazzi 46), Cannavaro (Barzagli 63), Zambrotta, Gattuso, Pirlo (Barone 76), De Rossi (Grosso 46), Vieri, Gilardino (Iaquinta 46), Del Piero (Diana 46).

Aug 17 - Santander - friendly
Spain 2 (Garcia og 25, Vicente pen 37)
Uruguay 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 25,885. **Ref:** Benquerenca (Por)
Spain: Reina - Michel Salgado (Sergio Ramos 59), Puyol, Marchena, Del Horno (Antonio Lopez 71), Joaquin (Luis Garcia 59), Xavi, Xabi Alonso (Sergio Gonzalez 46), Vicente, Raul (Luque 68), Morientes (Fernando Torres 46).
Uruguay: Carini - Varela (Perez 77), Lopez, Sorondo, Dario Rodriguez, Estoyanoff (Regueiro 46), Garcia, Delgado (O Morales 59), Castro (Recoba 46), Morales (Zaleyeta 70), Forlan (Tejera 65).

Aug 17 - Stockholm - friendly
Sweden 2 (Larsson 19, Rosenberg 26)
Czech Republic 1 (Koller pen 22)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 23,117. **Ref:** Bennett (Eng)
Sweden: Isaksson - Ostlund, Mellberg (Elmander 46), P Hansson, Edman (Persson 46), Linderoth (D Andersson 77), Alexandersson, Kallstrom, Wilhelmsson, Rosenberg (Allback 67), Larsson (Arneng 84).
Czech Republic: Cech - Grygera, Rozehnal (Bolf 46), Hubschman (Pospech 46), Ujfalusi, Galasek (Zelenka 69), Smicer (Skacel 46), Heinz (Jun 78), Sionko (Polak 46), Baros, Koller.

Aug 17 - Swansea - friendly
Wales 0
Slovenia 0
Att: 10,016. **Ref:** Stokes (Ire)
Wales: Coyne - Duffy (Edwards 73), Page, Gabbidon, Partridge (G Roberts 89), Ricketts, C Robinson (Davies 85), Fletcher, Vaughan (Parry 68), Earnshaw (Williams 61), Hartson.
Slovenia: B Mavric (Handanovic 62) - M Mavric (Sukalo 46), Knavs, Cesar, Filekovic, Komac (Pecnik 87), Zlogar, Pokorn (Ilic 56), N Ceh, Lavric (Rodic 46), Acimovic (Cimirotic 46).

Wednesday, August 24

Aug 24 - Tehran - friendly
Iran 4 (Alavi 7, Nekounam 41, 90, Daei 56)
Libya 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Delawar (Bah)
Iran: Mirzapour - Kaebi (Shakouri 61), Golmohammadi, Nosrati, Zare, Nekounam, Alavi (Maneie 74), Kazemian (Jabbari 46), Mobali (Borhani 46), Vahedinikbakht (Taymoorian 46), Daei (Bizik 75).

COSAFA CASTLE CUP

In Mmabatho, South Africa

Semi-finals

Aug 13
Angola 1 (Love 52)
Zimbabwe 2 (Chandida 59, Sandaka 76)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Kapanga (Mwi)
Angola: Lama - Jacinto, Jamba, Lebo-Lebo, Yamba Asha, Andre, Jorgito (Calusha 67), Fofana (Ze Kalanga 57), Stopirra (Chinho 80), Akwa, Love.
Zimbabwe: Muzadzi - Lungu (Moyo 89), Mwanjili, J Matola, Dick, Kurauzvione (Rambanapisi 74), Matawu, Sibanda, Chandida, Sandaka, Badza.

Aug 13
South Africa 2 (Ndlela 63, Raselemane 68)
Zambia 2 (Chamanga 18, C Katongo 24)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Raolimanana (Mad)
Zambia 9-8 on pens
South Africa: Fernandez - Fransman, Katza, Gaxa (Petersen 25), Booth (Bianchi 46), Evans, Nkosi (Klate 65), Vilakazi, Richards, Raselemane, Ndlela.
Zambia: Mweene - Chilembi, Musonda, Tana, Nketani, Bakala, Lungu, C Katongo, F Katongo (Mulenga 64), Chamanga (Kalaba 89), L Chalwe (Mwila 50).

Final

Aug 14
Zimbabwe 1 (Chandida 84)
Zambia 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Massango (Moz)
Zimbabwe: Muzadzi - Lungu (Moyo 89), Mwanjili, J Matola, Dick, Rambanapisi, Matawu (Manuella 70), Sibanda, Chandida, Sandaka, Badza (Tsipa 74).
Zambia: Mweene - Hachilensa, Musonda, Tana, Nketani, Bakala, Lungu (Mwaba 59), C Katongo, Mulenga (Kalaba 70), Chamanga (Mwila 59), L Chalwe.

EAST ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

In South Korea

July 31 - Daejeon
South Korea 1 (Kim Jin-kyu 72)
China 1 (Sun Xiang 53)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,374. **Ref:** Nishimura (Jap)
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - You Kyoung-youl, Kim Han-yoon, Kim Jung-woo, Kim Dong-jin, Kim Sang-sik (Kim Do-heon 68), Kim Jin-ryong, Lee Dong-gook, Park Kyu-seon (Chung Kyung-ho 46), Kim Jin-kyu, Lee Chun-soo (Choi Tae-uk 71).
China: Li Leilei - Li Weifeng, Zhang Yaokun, Ji Mingyi, Sun Xiang (Wang Liang 79), Zhao Xuri, Li Yan, Cao Yang, Gao Lin, Chen Tao (Xu Yunlong 56), Xie Hui (Zhang Yonghai 88). *Sent off: Gao Lin 5min, Cao Yang 82min, Li Weifeng 85min.*

July 31 - Daejeon
North Korea 1 (Kim Yong-jun 25)
Japan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 23,150. **Ref:** Tan (Chn)
North Korea: Kim Myong-gil - Pak Chol-jin, Cha Jong-hyok, So Hyok-chol, Han Song-chol, Ri Han-jae (Kim Song-chol 23), Kim Yong-jun, Nam Song-chol, Kim Chol-ho, Kim Myong-chol (Choe Ung-chon 55), Pak Song-gwan (An Jong-ho 72).
Japan: Kawaguchi - M Tanaka (Motoyama 46), Miyamoto, Nakazawa, Fukunishi, Endo (Maki 77), Kaji, Alex, Ogasawara, Oguro, Tamada (T Tanaka 67).

Aug 3 - Daejeon
Japan 2 (Moniwa 59, T Tanaka 87)
China 2 (Li Jinyu 37, Zhang Yonghai 43)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 1,827
Japan: Narazaki - Tsuboi, Chano, Moniwa, Abe, Konno, Komano, Murai (Alex 74), Motoyama (Tamada 66), Maki (Oguro 66), T Tanaka.
China: Li Leilei - Zhang Yaokun, Ji Mingyi, Zhang Yonghai (Chen Tao 61), Sun Xiang, Zhao Xuri, Li Yan, Wang Liang, Gao Lin (Zhou Haibin 68), Xu Yunlong, Li Jinyu (Hao Junmin 85).

Aug 4 - Jeonju
South Korea 0
North Korea 0
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - You Kyoung-youl, Kim Jung-woo (Chung Kyung-ho 29), Kim Sang-sik, Kim Jin-ryong, Kwak Hee-ju (Kim Han-yoon 40), Yang Sang-min, Park Kyu-seon, Kim Jin-kyu, Lee Chun-soo (Choi Tae-uk 75), Lee Dong-gook.
North Korea: Kim Myong-gil - Cha Jong-hyok, Kim Chol-ho (Ri Han-jae 61), Kim Myong-chol (Choe Ung-chon 40; An Chol-hyok 69), Han Song-chol, Nam Song-chol, Kim Yong-jun, Kim Song-chol, So Hyok-chol, Pak Chol-jin, Pak Song-gwan.

Aug 7 - Daegu
China 2 (Li Yan pen 14, Xie Hui 66)
North Korea 0
HT: 1-0
China: Li Leilei - Xu Yunlong, Zhang Yaokun, Ji Mingyi, Wang Liang, Zheng Bin (Sun Xiang 51), Zhao Xuri, Li Yan, Cao Yang, Gao Lin (Zhang Yonghai 90), Xie Hui (Li Jinyu 68).

Aug 7 - Daegu
South Korea 0
Japan 1 (Nakazawa 87)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 42,753
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - You Kyoung-youl, Kim Young-chul, Kim Jin-kyu, Oh Beom-seok, Kim Do-heon (Kim Jung-woo 70), Kim Dong-jin, Baek Ji-hoon (Hong Soon-hak 82), Lee Dong-gook, Chung Kyung-ho (Park Chu-young 74), Lee Chun-soo.
Japan: Doi - Tsuboi (Nakazawa 60), Chano, Moniwa, Abe, Konno, Komano, Motoyama (Ogasawara 68), Murai, Maki, Tamada (Oguro 78).

EAST ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
China	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
Japan	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
North Korea	3	1	1	1	1	2	4
South Korea	3	0	2	1	1	2	2

GENEVA TOURNAMENT

Semi-finals
July 29
Egypt 5 (Aboutraika 59, 84, Hosni 66, Zaki 70, 88)
Qatar Olympic XI 0
HT: 0-0

July 29
Kuwait 1 (Mutawa 43)
United Arab Emirates 1 (Saad 10)
HT: 1-1
UAE 7-6 on pens

Third-place play-off
July 31
Qatar Olympic XI 1 (Jassim 37)
Kuwait 0
HT: 1-0

Final
July 31
Egypt 0
United Arab Emirates 0
Egypt 5-4 on pens

VALERII LOBANOVSKYI TOURNAMENT

In Kiev

Semi-finals
Aug 15
Ukraine 0
Israel 0
Ref: Mikulski (Pol)
Israel 5-3 on pens
Ukraine: Shovkovskyi - Nesmachnyi, Vaschuk, Tymoshchuk, Yezerskyi, Rebrov, Sviderskyi (Radchenko 59), Nazarenko (Husin 63), Venhlynskyi (Kosyrin 77), Rotan, Kalinichenko (Husiev 55).

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – group stage draw & match schedule

Group A

JUVENTUS (Ita)
RAPID WIEN (Aut)
BAYERN MUNICH (Ger)
CLUB BRUGGE (Blg)

Wed, September 14
Rapid Wien v Bayern Munich
Club Brugge v Juventus

Tue, September 27
Juventus v Rapid Wien
Bayern Munich v Club Brugge

Tue, October 18
Bayern Munich v Juventus
Rapid Wien v Club Brugge

Wed, November 2
Juventus v Bayern Munich
Club Brugge v Rapid Wien

Tue, November 22
Bayern Munich v Rapid Wien
Juventus v Club Brugge

Wed, December 7
Rapid Wien v Juventus
Club Brugge v Bayern Munich

Group B

THUN (Swi)
SPARTA PRAGUE (Cze)
AJAX (Hol)
ARSENAL (Eng)

Wed, September 14
Sparta Prague v Ajax
Arsenal v Thun

Tue, September 27
Thun v Sparta Prague
Ajax v Arsenal

Tue, October 18
Ajax v Thun
Sparta Prague v Arsenal

Wed, November 2
Thun v Ajax
Arsenal v Sparta Prague

Tue, November 22
Ajax v Sparta Prague
Thun v Arsenal

Wed, December 7
Sparta Prague v Thun
Arsenal v Ajax

Group C

BARCELONA (Spa)
UDINESE (Ita)
PANATHINAIKOS (Gre)
WERDER BREMEN (Ger)

Wed, September 14
Udinese v Panathinaikos
Werder Bremen v Barcelona

Tue, September 27
Barcelona v Udinese
Panathinaikos v Werder Bremen

Tue, October 18
Panathinaikos v Barcelona
Udinese v Werder Bremen

Wed, November 2
Barcelona v Panathinaikos
Werder Bremen v Udinese

Tue, November 22
Panathinaikos v Udinese
Barcelona v Werder Bremen

Wed, December 7
Udinese v Barcelona
Werder Bremen v Panathinaikos

Group D

LILLE (Fra)
VILLARREAL (Spa)
MANCHESTER UNITED (Eng)
BENFICA (Por)

Wed, September 14
Villarreal v Manchester United
Benfica v Lille

Tue, September 27
Lille v Villarreal
Manchester United v Benfica

Tue, October 18
Manchester United v Lille
Villarreal v Benfica

Wed, November 2
Lille v Manchester United
Benfica v Villarreal

Tue, November 22
Manchester United v Villarreal
Lille v Benfica

Wed, December 7
Villarreal v Lille
Benfica v Manchester United

Group E

SCHALKE (Ger)
MILAN (Ita)
FENERBAHCE (Tur)
PSV EINDHOVEN (Hol)

Tue, September 13
Milan v Fenerbahce
PSV Eindhoven v Schalke

Wed, September 28
Schalke v Milan
Fenerbahce v PSV Eindhoven

Wed, October 19
Fenerbahce v Schalke
Milan v PSV Eindhoven

Tue, November 1
Schalke v Fenerbahce
PSV Eindhoven v Milan

Wed, November 23
Fenerbahce v Milan
Schalke v PSV Eindhoven

Tue, December 6
Milan v Schalke
PSV Eindhoven v Fenerbahce

Group F

ROSENBORG (Nor)
LYON (Fra)
REAL MADRID (Spa)
OLYMPIAKOS (Gre)

Tue, September 13
Lyon v Real Madrid
Olympiakos v Rosenborg

Wed, September 28
Rosenborg v Lyon
Real Madrid v Olympiakos

Wed, October 19
Real Madrid v Rosenborg
Lyon v Olympiakos

Tue, November 1
Rosenborg v Real Madrid
Olympiakos v Lyon

Wed, November 23
Real Madrid v Lyon
Rosenborg v Olympiakos

Tue, December 6
Lyon v Rosenborg
Olympiakos v Real Madrid

Group G

LIVERPOOL (Eng)
CHELSEA (Eng)
ANDERLECHT (Blg)
BETIS (Spa)

Tue, September 13
Chelsea v Anderlecht
Betis v Liverpool

Wed, September 28
Liverpool v Chelsea
Anderlecht v Betis

Wed, October 19
Anderlecht v Liverpool
Chelsea v Betis

Tue, November 1
Liverpool v Anderlecht
Betis v Chelsea

Wed, November 23
Anderlecht v Chelsea
Liverpool v Betis

Tue, December 6
Chelsea v Liverpool
Betis v Anderlecht

Group H

INTERNAZIONALE (Ita)
RANGERS (Sco)
FC PORTO (Por)
ARTMEDIA BRATISLAVA (Slk)

Tue, September 13
Rangers v FC Porto
Artmedia Bratislava v Internazionale

Wed, September 28
Internazionale v Rangers
FC Porto v Artmedia Bratislava

Wed, October 19
FC Porto v Internazionale
Rangers v Artmedia Bratislava

Tue, November 1
Internazionale v FC Porto
Artmedia Bratislava v Rangers

Wed, November 23
FC Porto v Rangers
Internazionale v Artmedia Bratislava

Tue, December 6
Rangers v Internazionale
Artmedia Bratislava v FC Porto

Israel: Davidovich - Ben Haim (Harazi 77), Benado, Keisi, Revivo (Toama 55), Badir, Tal (Gershon 90), Golan (Biton 73), Yehil (Suan 46), Katan (Balili 85), Saban.

Aug 15
Poland 3 (Frankoswski 30, pen 42, Rasiak 37)
Serbia & Montenegro 2 (Zigic 32, Vidic 59)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Orekhov (Ukr)
Poland: Kowalewski (Przyrowski 80) - Baszczynski, Jop, J Bak (Klos 46), Dudka, Gorawski (Rzasa 75), Sobolewski, M Lewandowski, Kosowski (Michal Zewlakow 88), Frankowski (Mila 46), Rasiak (Zurawski 72).
Serbia & Montenegro: Jevric - M Markovic (Koroman 66), Vidic, Gavrancic, Lukovic, D Stankovic (Maric 78), Duljaj, Vukic (Ilic 62), P Djordjevic (Mladenovic 81), Kezman (Milosevic 46), Zigic (Ljuboja 81).

Third-place play-off
Aug 17
Ukraine 2 (Rebrov 61, Nazarenko 72)
Serbia & Montenegro 1 (Kezman 90)
HT: 0-0
Ukraine: Startsev - Nesmachnyi (Radchenko 67), Vaschuk, Yezerskyi (Tymoshchuk 55), Rusol, Shelaiev, Rykun (Nazarenko 59), Voronin (Rebrov 51), Husiev, Husin, Shevchenko (Venhlynskyi 46).
Serbia & Montenegro: Jevric - Vidic (M Dudic 46), Dragutinovic (Koroman 77), Gavrancic, Krstajic, P Djordjevic (Ljuboja 77), Duljaj, Maric, Ilic (Vukic 60), Milosevic (Zigic 46), Jestrovic (Kezman 46).

Final
Aug 17
Poland 3 (Szymkowiak 19, Rasiak 77, 89)
Israel 2 (Badir 35, Katan 47)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Karadzic (Ser)
Poland: Boruc - Michal Zewlakow (Niedzielan 69), J Bak (Jop 46), Klos (M Lewandowski 46), Rzasa, Smolarek (Rasiak 73), Szymkowiak, Radomski, Krzynowek (Kosowski 90), Frankowski (Przyrowski 34), Zurawski. *Sent off: Boruc 34min.*
Israel: Awat - Benado (Biton 46), Harazi, Gershon, Saban (Shivon 90), Badir, Suan (Yechiel 79), Tal, Keisi, Katan (Toama 67), Golan (Balili 73). *Sent off: Harazi 75min.*

WORLD

CLUB WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

In Japan

Draw

Quarter-finals
Dec 11: AFC representatives v CAF representatives (Tokyo; Game 1)
Dec 12: Sydney FC v Deportivo Saprissa (Toyota; Game 2)

Semi-finals
Dec 14: Winners Game 1 v Sao Paulo (Tokyo)
Dec 15: Winners Game 2 v Liverpool (Yokohama)

Fifth-place play-off
Dec 16: *In Tokyo*

Third-place play-off
Dec 18: *In Yokohama*

Final
Dec 18: *In Yokohama*

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

2nd qualifying round, 2nd legs

August 2

Celtic (Sco) 4 (Thompson pen 21, Hartson 44, McManus 54, Beattie 82)
Artmedia Bratislava (Slk) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
Artmedia Bratislava 5-4 on agg

Liverpool (Eng) 2 (Gerrard 77, Cisse 86)
FBK Kaunas (Lit) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Paparesta (Ita)
Liverpool 5-1 on agg

August 3

Brondby (Den) 3 (Lorentzen 9, Aladashvili og 42, Kamper 86)
Dinamo Tbilisi (Geo) 1 (Iashvili 65)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Weiner (Ger)
Brondby 5-1 on agg

CSKA Sofia (Bul) 2 (Zadi 2, Todorov 90)
SK Tirana (Alb) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ingvarsson (Swe)
CSKA Sofia 4-0 on agg

Hajduk Split (Cro) 0
Debrecen (Hun) 5 (Halmosi 1, 27, Kerekes 22, Sidibe 76, Kiss 90)
HT: 0-3. **Ref:** Havrilla (Slk)
Debrecen 8-0 on agg

FC Haka (Fin) 1 (Lehtinen 9)
Valerenga (Nor) 4 (Waehler 26, Flo 28, 74, Iversen 59)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Webb (Eng)
Valerenga 5-1 on agg

Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) 2 (Sychev 75, Asatiani 85)
Rabotnicki Kometal (Mac) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Vollquartz (Den)
Lokomotiv Moscow 3-1 on agg

Maccabi Haifa (Isr) 2 (Colautti 10, Arbeitman 60)
Malmo (Swe) 2 (Alves 21, Abelsson 88)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Tudor (Rom)
Sent off: Arbeitman (Maccabi Haifa) 70min
Malmo 5-4 on agg

Neftchi (Aze) 1 (Boret pen 5)
Anderlecht (Blg) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Anderlecht 5-1 on agg

Rapid Wien (Aut) 3 (Lawaree 47, 81, Dollinger 86)
F91 Dudelange (Lux) 2 (Tosun og 7, Gruszczynski 37)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Briakos (Gre)
Rapid Wien 9-3 on agg

Serif Tiraspol (Mol) 0
Partizan Belgrade (Ser) 1 (Odita 74)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Garibian (Fra)
Partizan Belgrade 2-0 on agg

Steaua Bucharest (Rom) 4 (Nicolita 18, Iacob 27, Dinita 61, Oprita pen 90)
Shelbourne (Ire) 1 (J Byrne 38)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Colombo (Fra)
Sent off: Rogers (Shelbourne) 5min; Dica 5min, Dinita 89min (both Steaua)
Steaua Bucharest 4-1 on agg

Thun (Swi) 1 (Bernardi 90)
Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Proenca (Por)
Sent off: Rodrigo (Kyiv Dynamo) 90min
Thun 3-2 on agg

Trabzonspor (Tur) 1 (Fatih Tekke 40)
Anorthosis (Cyp) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Lehner (Aut)
Sent off: Katsavakis (Anorthosis) 74min
Anorthosis 3-2 on agg

3rd qualifying round, 1st legs

August 9

Anorthosis 1 (Frousos 72)
Rangers (Sco) 2 (Novo 64, Ricksen 71)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)

Betis (Spa) 1 (Edu 90)
Monaco (Fra) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)

Everton (Eng) 1 (Beattie 42)
Villarreal (Spa) 2 (Figueroa 27, Josico 45)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Ovrebo (Nor)

Manchester United (Eng) 3 (Rooney 7, Van Nistelrooy 49, Cristiano Ronaldo 63)
Debrecen 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Medina Cantalejo (Spa)

Valerenga 1 (Iversen 57)
Club Brugge (Blg) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Hrinak (Slk)

Wisla Krakow (Pol) 3 (Pawel Brozek 13, Uche 52, Frankowski 70)
Panathinaikos (Gre) 1 (Olisadebe 4)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)

August 10

Anderlecht 2 (Goor 7, Mpenza 38)
Slavia Prague (Cze) 1 (Jarolim 21)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Baskakov (Rus)

Artmedia Bratislava 0
Partizan Belgrade 0
Ref: Frojdfeldt (Swe)

Basle (Swi) 2 (Degen 27, Rossi 52)
Werder Bremen (Ger) 1 (Klose 73)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Allaerts (Blg)

Brondby 2 (Skoubo 33, Escude og 90)
Ajax (Hol) 2 (Rosenberg 30, Babel 73)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** De Santis (Ita)

CSKA Sofia 1 (V Dimitrov 45)
Liverpool 3 (Cisse 25, Morientes 31, 58)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Wegereef (Hol)

Malmo 0
Thun 1 (Adriano 34)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Dauden Ibanez (Spa)

Rapid Wien 1 (Vlahovic pen 75)
Lokomotiv Moscow 1 (Samedov 10)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Cortez Batista (Por)
Sent off: Bikey (Lokomotiv Moscow) 74min

Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) 0
Internazionale (Ita) 2 (Martins 68, Adriano 79)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)

Sporting Lisbon (Por) 0
Udinese (Ita) 1 (Iaquinta pen 27)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Vassaras (Gre)

Steaua Bucharest 1 (Iacob 30)
Rosenborg (Nor) 1 (Helstad 85)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Braamhaar (Hol)

3rd qualifying round, 2nd legs

August 23

Liverpool 0
CSKA Sofia 1 (Iliev 14)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
Liverpool 3-2 on agg

Lokomotiv Moscow 0
Rapid Wien 1 (Valachovic 84)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Rapid Wien 2-1 on agg

Monaco 2 (Gerard 33, Maoulida 63)
Betis 2 (Ricardo Oliveira 17, 75)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Betis 3-2 on agg

Panathinaikos 4 (Morris 62, Olisadebe 65, Papadopoulos 87, Kotsios 114)
Wisla Krakow 1 (Sobolewski 78)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 3-1. **Ref:** Riley (Eng)
Sent off: Sobolewski (Wisla Krakow) 90min
Panathinaikos 5-4 on agg

Partizan Belgrade 0
Artmedia Bratislava 0
Aet. **Ref:** Bennett (Eng)
Agg 0-0. Artmedia Bratislava 4-3 on pens

Rosenborg 3 (Solli 38, Odegaard 57, Radoi og 60)
Steaua Bucharest 2 (Radoi 74, Iacob 76)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Sars (Fra)
Rosenborg 4-3 on agg

Thun 3 (Bernardi 26, Lustrinelli 40, 66)
Malmo 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Farina (Ita)
Thun 4-0 on agg

Udinese 3 (Iaquinta pen 23, 90, Natali 35)
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Douala 38, Pinilla 90)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Udinese 4-2 on agg

August 24

Ajax 3 (Babel 50, Sneijder 80, 88)
Brondby 1 (Elmander 44)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Ajax 5-3 on agg

Club Brugge 1 (Balaban 79)
Valerenga 0
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 1-0. **Ref:** Plautz (Aut)
Sent off: Waehler (Valerenga) 84min
Agg 1-1. Club Brugge 4-3 on pens

Debrecen 0
Manchester United 3 (Heinze 20, 60, Richardson 65)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Manchester United 6-0 on agg

Internazionale 1 (Recoba 12)
Shakhtar Donetsk 1 (Elano 25)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Fandel (Ger)
Internazionale 3-1 on agg

Rangers 2 (Buffel 39, Prso 58)
Anorthosis 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)
Rangers 4-1 on agg

Slavia Prague 0
Anderlecht 2 (Serhat 72, Mpenza 84)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Poulat (Fra)
Anderlecht 4-1 on agg

Villarreal 2 (Sorin 21, Forlan 90)
Everton 1 (Arteta 69)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Collina (Ita)
Villarreal 4-2 on agg

Werder Bremen 3 (Klasnic 64, 72, Borowski pen 67)
Basle 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Milton Nielsen (Den)
Sent off: Klose (Werder Bremen) 79min
Werder Bremen 4-2 on agg

UEFA CUP

2nd qualifying round
1st legs - August 11; 2nd legs - August 25

APOEL (Cyp) v Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr)
1-0, 2-2 (agg 3-2)
Banants (Arm) v Dnipro (Ukr)
2-4, 0-4 (agg 2-8)
Baskimi (Mac) v Maccabi Petach Tikva (Isr)
0-5, 0-6 (agg 0-11)
Brann (Nor) v Allianssi (Fin)
0-0, 2-0 (agg 2-0)
FC Copenhagen (Den) v Carmarthen (Wal)
2-0, 2-0 (agg 4-0)
Dinamo Bucharest (Rom) v Omonia (Cyp)
3-1, 1-2 (agg 4-3)
Djurgardens (Swe) v Cork City (Ire)
1-1, 0-0 (agg 1-1; Cork on away goals)
Esbjerg (Den) v Tromso (Nor)
0-1, 1-0 (agg 1-1; Tromso 3-2 on pens)
Grasshopper (Swi) v Wisla Plock (Pol)
1-0, 2-3 (agg 3-3; Grasshopper on away goals)
Groclin Grodzisk (Pol) v Banska Bystrica (Slk)
4-1, 0-0 (agg 4-1)
Halmstads (Swe) v Linfield (NI)
1-1, 4-2 (agg 5-3)
Inter Zapresic (Cro) v Red Star Belgrade (Ser)
1-3, 0-4 (agg 1-7)
Kryliya Sovetov (Rus) v BATE Borisov (Bls)
2-0, 2-0 (agg 4-0)
Legia Warsaw (Pol) v Zurich (Swi)
0-1, 1-4 (agg 1-5)
Litex Lovech (Bul) v Rijeka (Cro)
1-0, 1-2 (agg 2-2; Lovech on away goals)
Mainz (Ger) v Keflavik (Ice)
2-0, 2-0 (agg 4-0)
Matav Sopron (Hun) v Metalurh Donetsk (Ukr)
0-3, 1-2 (agg 1-5)
Metalurgs Liepaja (Lat) v Genk (Blg)
2-3, 0-3 (agg 2-6)
Midtjylland (Den) v B36 (Far)
2-1, 2-2 (agg 4-3)
MSK Zilina (Slk) v Austria Wien (Aut)
1-2, 2-2 (agg 3-4)

MTZ-Ripo (Bls) v Teplice (Cze)
1-1, 1-2 (agg 2-3)
MyPa (Fin) v Dundee United (Sco)
0-0, 2-2 (agg 2-2; MyPa on away goals)
Nistru Otaci (Mol) v Grazer AK (Aut)
0-2, 0-1 (agg 0-3)
OFK Belgrade (Ser) v Lokomotiv Plovdiv (Bul)
2-1, 0-1 (agg 2-2; Lok Plovdiv on away goals)
Pasching (Aut) v Zenit St Petersburg (Rus)
2-2, 1-1 (agg 3-3; Zenit on away goals)
Publikum (Sln) v Levski Sofia (Bul)
1-0, 0-3 (agg 1-3)
Rapid Bucharest (Rom) v Vardar (Mac)
3-0, 1-1 (agg 4-1)
Rhyl (Wal) v Viking (Nor)
0-1, 1-2 (agg 1-3)
SC Ashdod (Isr) v Domzale (Sln)
2-2, 1-1 (agg 3-3; Domzale on away goals)
Vaduz (Lie) v Besiktas (Tur)
0-1, 1-5 (agg 1-6)
Zeta (Ser) v Siroki Brijeg (Bos)
0-1, 2-4 (agg 2-5)

1st round draw

Aris Salonika (Gre) v Roma (Ita)
Auxerre (Fra) v Levski Sofia (Bul)
Banik Ostrava (Cze) v Heerenveen (Hol)
Basle (Swi) v Siroki Brijeg (Bos)
Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) v CSKA Sofia (Bul)
Besiktas (Tur) v Malmo (Swe)
Bolton (Eng) v Lokomotiv Plovdiv (Bul)
Brondby (Den) v Zurich (Swi)
CSKA Moscow (Rus) v Midtjylland (Den)
Dinamo Bucharest (Rom) v Everton (Eng)
Feyenoord (Hol) v Rapid Bucharest (Rom)
Germinal Beerschot (Blg) v Marseille (Fra)
Grazer AK (Aut) v Strasbourg (Fra)
Guimaraes (Por) v Wisla Krakow (Pol)
Halmstads (Swe) v Sporting Lisbon (Por)
Hamburg (Ger) v FC Copenhagen (Den)
Hertha (Ger) v APOEL (Cyp)
Hibernian (Sco) v Dnipro (Ukr)
Krylliya Sovetov (Rus) v AZ Alkmaar (Hol)
Lens (Fra) v Groclin Grodzisk (Pol)
Litex Lovech (Bul) v Genk (Blg)
Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) v Brann (Nor)
Maccabi Petach Tikva (Isr) v Partizan Belgrade (Ser)
Metalurh Donetsk (Ukr) v PAOK Salonika (Gre)
Middlesbrough (Eng) v Xanthi (Gre)
Monaco (Fra) v Willem II (Hol)
MyPa (Fin) v Grasshopper (Swi)
Palermo (Ita) v Anorthosis (Cyp)
Red Star Belgrade (Ser) v Sporting Braga (Por)
Rennes (Fra) v Osasuna (Spa)
Setubal (Por) v Sampdoria (Ita)
Sevilla (Spa) v Mainz (Ger)
Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) v Debrecen (Hun)
Slavia Prague (Cze) v Cork City (Ire)
Stuttgart (Ger) v Domzale (Sln)
Teplice (Cze) v Espanyol (Spa)
Tromso (Nor) v Galatasaray (Tur)
Valerenga (Nor) v Steaua Bucharest (Rom)
Viking (Nor) v Austria Wien (Aut)
Zenit St Petersburg (Rus) v AEK Athens (Gre)

1st legs - September 15; 2nd legs - September 29

INTERTOTO CUP

Semi-finals

1st legs - July 27; 2nd legs - August 3

Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) v Newcastle (Eng)
2-1, 2-1 (agg 4-2)
Lazio (Ita) v Marseille (Fra)
1-1, 0-3 (agg 1-4)
Sigma Olomouc (Cze) v Hamburg (Ger)
0-1, 0-3 (agg 0-4)
Valencia (Spa) v Roda JC (Hol)
4-0, 0-0 (agg 4-0)
Wolfsburg (Ger) v Lens (Fra)
0-0, 0-4 (agg 0-4)
Zalgiris Vilnius (Lit) v CFR Cluj (Rom)
1-2, 1-5 (agg 2-7)

Finals

1st legs - August 9; 2nd legs - August 23

CFR Cluj v Lens
1-1, 1-3 (agg 2-4)
Deportivo La Coruna v Marseille
2-0, 1-5 (agg 3-5)
Hamburg v Valencia
1-0, 0-0 (agg 1-0)

Winners enter UEFA Cup at 1st round stage

AUSTRIA

July 30: Wacker Tirol 1 Admira 0; Salzburg 0 Rapid Wien 2; Austria Wien 2 SV Ried 0; Grazer AK 1 Mattersburg 0.
July 31: Pasching 2 Sturm Graz 2.
Aug 6: Rapid Wien 3 Austria Wien 1; Wacker Tirol 2 Pasching 2; SV Ried 2 Grazer AK 1; Admira 1 Mattersburg 2.
Aug 7: Sturm Graz 0 Salzburg 0.
Aug 13: Salzburg 2 Wacker Tirol 0.
Aug 14: Pasching 5 Admira 0; Austria Wien 2 Sturm Graz 1; Grazer AK 1 Rapid Wien 1; Mattersburg 4 SV Ried 3.
Aug 20: Rapid Wien 1 Mattersburg 2; Wacker Tirol 2 Austria Wien 2; Pasching 1 Salzburg 0; Admira 2 SV Ried 2.
Aug 22: Sturm Graz 0 Grazer AK 2.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria Wien	7	5	1	1	14	10	16
Rapid Wien	7	4	1	2	14	7	13
Grazer AK	7	4	1	2	12	8	13
Pasching	7	2	4	1	10	6	10
Mattersburg	7	3	1	3	9	12	10
SV Ried	7	2	3	2	10	9	9
Sturm Graz	7	2	3	2	8	9	9
Salzburg	7	2	1	4	7	9	7
Wacker Tirol	7	1	4	2	5	9	7
Admira	7	0	1	6	6	16	1

BELGIUM

Friday, August 5
Club Brugge 2 (Leko 14, Balaban 25)
Mouscron 0 Att: 24,549

Saturday, August 6
Anderlecht 6 (Mpenza 9, Serhat 24, 65, Zetterberg 45, Goor 59, Mitu 85)
La Louviere 0 Att: 24,937

Beveren 0
FC Brussels 2 (Sels 43, De Camargo 90) Att: 3,500

Gent 1 (De Beule 43)
Zulte-Waregem 3 (Sergeant 38, Leleu 52, Van Nieuwenhuyze 85) Att: 8,809

Lokeren 1 (Bance 48)
Genk 1 (Vandenbergh pen 83) Att: 5,800

St Truiden 1 (Stolica 19)
Roeselare 0 Att: 6,500

Standard 3 (Tchite 5, Geraerts 44, Sergio Conceicao 90)
Lierse 1 (Imschoot 24) Att: 20,000

Westerlo 2 (Coelho 8, C Janssens 11)
Cercle Brugge 0 Att: 4,500

Sunday, August 7
Charleroi 2 (Christ 59, Reina 90)
Germinal Beerschot 0 Att: 10,550

Friday, August 12
La Louviere 1 (Sanchez 80)
Gent 1 (Aliyu Datti 37) Att: 4,020

Saturday, August 13
FC Brussels 1 (De Camargo 27)
Club Brugge 1 (Ishiaku 24) Att: 6,500

Germinal Beerschot 0
Westerlo 1 (De Wilde 89) Att: 7,500

Mouscron 0
Lokeren 2 (Vidarsson 55, Van Handenhoven 86) Att: 6,500

Sunday, August 14
Cercle Brugge 0
Anderlecht 2 (Serhat pen 27, Mpenza 80) Att: 8,000

Genk 0
Charleroi 0 Att: 21,138

Lierse 1 (Nunes 34)
St Truiden 0 Att: 6,400

Roeselare 1 (Eloi 40)
Beveren 0 Att: 4,200

Zulte-Waregem 1 (Meert 5)
Standard 2 (Tchite 90, Garbini 90) Att: 6,000

Saturday, August 20
Anderlecht 3 (Jestrovic 37, pen 45, Mpenza 72)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Dosunmu 12) Att: 23,177

Beveren 4 (Zezeto 12, Diallo 28, 90, Gervinho 60)
Lierse 1 (Imschoot 19) Att: 3,750

Charleroi 1 (Christ 46)
Mouscron 0 Att: 11,020

Club Brugge 1 (Balaban 5)
Roeselare 0 Att: 24,681

Gent 1 (Vrancken 58)
Cercle Brugge 0 Att: 5,920

Westerlo 1 (Coelho 15)
Genk 1 (Vandenbergh 10) Att: 7,000

Zulte-Waregem 0
La Louviere 0 Att: 4,822

Sunday, August 21
Lokeren 1 (Bance 3)
FC Brussels 0 Att: 4,300

Standard 2 (Sergio Conceicao 75, Bangoura 90)
St Truiden 0 Att: 21,300

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	3	3	0	0	11	1	9
Standard	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
Club Brugge	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
Lokeren	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
Westerlo	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
Charleroi	3	2	1	0	3	0	7
Zulte-Waregem	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
FC Brussels	3	1	1	1	3	2	4
Gent	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Beveren	3	1	0	2	4	4	3
Genk	3	0	3	0	2	2	3
Roeselare	3	1	0	2	1	2	3
St Truiden	3	1	0	2	1	3	3
Lierse	3	1	0	2	3	7	3
La Louviere	3	0	2	1	1	7	2
Germinal B	3	0	0	3	1	6	0
Cercle Brugge	3	0	0	3	0	5	0
Mouscron	3	0	0	3	0	5	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS
3 Mbo Mpenza (Anderlecht)
3 Serhat Akin (Anderlecht)

BULGARIA

Aug 6: Belasitsa 2 Naftex 1; Botev 1 CSKA 4; Lovech 0 Pirin 1922 2; Lokomotiv Sofia 4 Marek 0.
Aug 7: Rodopa 0 Cherno More 1; Slavia 2 Pirin 0; Vihren 3 Beroe 1; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2 Levski 4.
Aug 13: Beroe 2 Botev 0; Pirin 0 Vihren 1; Cherno More 1 Slavia 0; Lokomotiv Sofia 3 Rodopa 1.
Aug 14: Marek 2 Levski 3; Naftex 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1; Pirin 1922 1 Belasitsa 1; CSKA 2 Lovech 1.
Aug 20: Rodopa 0 Marek 0; Lovech 1 Beroe 0; Belasitsa 1 CSKA 5; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 3 Pirin 1922 1; Levski 6 Naftex 0.
Aug 21: Slavia 2 Lokomotiv Sofia 0; Vihren 2 Cherno More 1; Botev 0 Pirin 0.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Levski	3	3	0	0	13	4	9
CSKA	3	3	0	0	11	3	9
Vihren	3	3	0	0	6	2	9
Lok Sofia	3	2	0	1	7	3	6
Slavia	3	2	0	1	4	1	6
Cherno More	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
Lok Plovdiv	3	1	1	1	6	6	4
Pirin 1922	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Belasitsa	3	1	1	1	4	7	4
Beroe	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Lovech	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Rodopa	3	0	1	2	1	4	1
Pirin	3	0	1	2	0	3	1
Marek	3	0	1	2	2	7	1
Botev	3	0	1	2	1	6	1
Naftex	3	0	1	2	2	9	1

CROATIA

July 30: Osijek 1 Dinamo 0; Rijeka 4 Cibalia 1; Inter 2 Pula 0; Varteks 3 Medimurje 2; Slaven 1 Kamen Ingrad 1; Hajduk 3 Zagreb 1.
Aug 6: Zagreb 0 Osijek 1; Kamen Ingrad 2 Hajduk 1; Medimurje 2 Slaven 0; Pula 0 Varteks 2; Cibalia 1 Inter 0; Dinamo 5 Rijeka 1.
Aug 13: Varteks 4 Cibalia 0; Slaven 1 Pula 1; Hajduk 1 Medimurje 0; Zagreb 2 Kamen Ingrad 1.
Aug 14: Osijek 0 Rijeka 1; Inter 0 Dinamo 6.
Aug 20: Kamen Ingrad 2 Osijek 0; Medimurje 0 Zagreb 0; Pula 2 Hajduk 0; Cibalia 1 Slaven 0; Dinamo 1 Varteks 0; Rijeka 0 Inter 0.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	5	4	0	1	16	2	12
Varteks	5	4	0	1	10	3	12
Hajduk	5	3	0	2	11	5	9
Rijeka	5	2	2	1	8	8	8
Kamen Ingrad	5	2	1	2	6	5	7
Zagreb	5	2	1	2	6	6	7
Inter	5	2	1	2	4	8	7
Osijek	5	2	0	3	2	9	6
Cibalia	5	2	0	3	3	12	6
Pula	5	1	2	2	5	7	5
Medimurje	5	1	1	3	5	6	4
Slaven	5	0	2	3	3	8	2

CZECH REPUBLIC

Aug 5: Slavia 1 Jihlava 1.
Aug 6: Plzen 1 Sparta 2; Zlin 0 Chmel Blsany 1.
Aug 7: Most 2 Teplice 1; Mlada Boleslav 2 Liberec 4; Pribram 2 Brno 1; Jablonec 2 Slovacko 1.
Aug 8: Olomouc 1 Ostrava 0.
Aug 13: Ostrava 4 Zlin 1; Sparta 2 Most 1.
Aug 14: Teplice 1 Slavia 0; Chmel Blsany 0 Plzen 3; Jihlava 2 Pribram 3; Jablonec 1 Olomouc 2.
Aug 15: Brno 0 Liberec 1.
Aug 20: Liberec 2 Sparta 0; Slavia 3 Jablonec 2.
Aug 21: Brno 1 Jihlava 2; Mlada Boleslav 4 Chmel Blsany 1; Pribram 1 Teplice 1; Plzen 1 Olomouc 0.
Aug 22: Most 4 Ostrava 0; Zlin 3 Slovacko 1.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liberec	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
Pribram	3	2	1	0	6	4	7
Most	3	2	0	1	7	3	6
Plzen	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
Olomouc	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
Sparta	3	2	0	1	4	4	6
Jihlava	3	1	1	1	5	5	4
Slavia	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Teplice	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Mlada Boleslav	2	1	0	1	6	5	3
Jablonec	3	1	0	2	5	6	3
Ostrava	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Zlin	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Chmel Blsany	3	1	0	2	2	7	3
Brno	3	0	0	3	2	5	0
Slovacko	2	0	0	2	2	5	0

DENMARK

July 30: AaB 1 Midtjylland 1.
July 31: Esbjerg 2 Brondby 3; Silkeborg 3 SonderjyskE 2; Nordsjaelland 1 FC Copenhagen 2; AGF 2 Viborg 3; Horsens 0 OB 0.
Aug 6: Brondby 3 AaB 1.
Aug 7: Esbjerg 4 Silkeborg 0; Midtjylland 2 Horsens 1; OB 0 Nordsjaelland 0; Viborg 3 SonderjyskE 1; FC Copenhagen 1 AGF 1.
Aug 13: AGF 0 OB 4.
Aug 14: Nordsjaelland 3 Midtjylland 2; Silkeborg 1 Viborg 1; SonderjyskE 0 FC Copenhagen 1; AaB 2 Esbjerg 0; Horsens 0 Brondby 0.
Aug 20: Brondby 2 Nordsjaelland 1.
Aug 21: Esbjerg 0 Horsens 0; Midtjylland 3 AGF 3; OB 2 SonderjyskE 3; AaB 1 Silkeborg 1; FC Copenhagen 2 Viborg 1.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brondby	6	5	1	0	13	4	16
FC Copenhagen	6	5	1	0	9	3	16
Viborg	6	4	1	1	14	7	13
OB	6	2	3	1	10	6	9
Midtjylland	6	2	2	2	10	12	8
Silkeborg	6	2	2	2	7	11	8
SonderjyskE	6	2	1	3	9	11	7
Esbjerg	6	1	2	3	9	9	5
AaB	6	1	2	3	6	8	5
Nordsjaelland	6	1	2	3	7	10	5
Horsens	6	0	3	3	1	7	3
AGF	6	0	2	4	8	15	2

ENGLAND

Saturday, August 13

Aston Villa 2 (Phillips 4, Davis 9)
Bolton 2 (Davies 6, Ivan Campo 8) Att: 33,263

Everton 0
Manchester Utd 2 (Van Nistelrooy 43, Rooney 46) Att: 38,610

Fulham 0
Birmingham 0 Att: 16,550

Manchester City 0
West Bromwich 0 Att: 42,983

Middlesbrough 0
Liverpool 0 Att: 31,908

Portsmouth 0
Tottenham 2 (Griffin og 45, Defoe 64) Att: 20,215

Sunderland 1 (Gray 32)
Charlton 3 (Bent 11, 90, Murphy 64) Att: 34,446

West Ham 3 (Sheringham 46, Reo-Coker 62, Etherington 80)
Blackburn 1 (Todd 18) Att: 33,305

Sunday, August 14

Arsenal 2 (Henry pen 81, Van Persie 87)
Newcastle 0 Att: 38,072

Wigan 0
Chelsea 1 (Crespo 90) Att: 23,575

Saturday, August 20

Birmingham 1 (Butt 7)
Manchester City 2 (Barton 20, Cole 47) Att: 26,366

Blackburn 2 (Gamst Pedersen 15, Tugay 71)
Fulham 1 (McBride 49) Att: 16,953

Charlton 1 (Bent 42)
Wigan 0 Att: 23,453

Liverpool 1 (Xabi Alonso 24)
Sunderland 0 Att: 44,913

Manchester Utd 1 (Van Nistelrooy 66)
Aston Villa 0 Att: 67,934

Newcastle 0
West Ham 0 Att: 51,620

Tottenham 2 (Defoe 49, Hossam 75)
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 35,844

West Bromwich 2 (Horsfield 2, 59)
Portsmouth 1 (Robert 63) Att: 24,404

Sunday, August 21

Bolton 0
Everton 1 (Bent 52) Att: 25,608

Chelsea 1 (Drogba 73)
Arsenal 0 Att: 42,136

Tuesday, August 23

Birmingham 0
Middlesbrough 3 (Viduka 14, 45, Queudrue 71) Att: 27,998

Portsmouth 1 (Lua Lua 42)
Aston Villa 1 (Hughes og 11) Att: 19,778

Sunderland 1 (Le Tallec 41)
Manchester City 2 (Vassell 10, Sinclair 35) Att: 33,357

Wednesday, August 24

Arsenal 4 (Cygan 32, 90, Henry 53, 82)
Fulham 1 (Jensen 22) Att: 37,867

Blackburn 0
Tottenham 0 Att: 22,375

Bolton 2 (Diouf 37, Giannakopoulos 50)
Newcastle 0 Att: 29,504

Chelsea 4 (Lampard 23, 80, J Cole 43, Drogba 68)
West Bromwich 0 Att: 41,201

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	3	3	0	0	6	0	9
Tottenham	3	2	1	0	4	0	7
Man City	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Arsenal	3	2	0	1	6	2	6
Charlton	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Man Utd	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
West Ham	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Bolton	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Middlesbrough	3	1	1	1	3	2	4
Liverpool	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Blackburn	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
West Brom	3	1	1	1	2	5	4
Everton	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Aston Villa	3	0	2	1	3	4	2
Portsmouth	3	0	1	2	2	5	1
Fulham	3	0	1	2	2	6	1
Birmingham	3	0	1	2	1	5	1
Newcastle	3	0	1	2	0	4	1
Wigan	2	0	0	2	0	2	0
Sunderland	3	0	0	3	2	6	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS
3 Darren Bent (Charlton)
3 Thierry Henry (Arsenal)

COMMUNITY SHIELD

Aug 7 - Millennium stadium, Cardiff
Chelsea 2 (Drogba 8, 57)
Arsenal 1 (Fabregas 65)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 58,014. **Ref:** Webb

FRANCE

Friday, July 29

Paris SG 4 (Kalou 5, Cisse 37, Rothen 48, Landrin 81)
Metz 1 (Ahn 69) Att: 42,848

Saturday, July 30

Lille 1 (Makoun 38)
Rennes 0 Att: 12,000

Marseille 0
Bordeaux 2 (Faubert 16, Ducasse 86) Att: 48,000

Nancy 0
Monaco 1 (Kapo 69) Att: 18,000

Nantes 2 (Yapi Yapo 4, Giombard 7)
Lens 0 Att: 29,895

Nice 1 (Vahirua 34)
Troyes 1 (Dallet 52) Att: 13,050

Saint-Etienne 0
Ajaccio 0 Att: 25,928

Sochaux 0
Toulouse 1 (Santos 16) Att: 13,324

Strasbourg 0
Auxerre 0 Att: 19,705

Sunday, July 31

Le Mans 1 (De Melo 57)
Lyon 2 (Wiltord 37, Carew 58) Att: 13,197

Saturday, August 6

Ajaccio 3 (Rocchi 11, Waldir Lucas Pereira 27, Saifi 65)
Lille 3 (Makoun 19, Gygax 39, Debuchy 90) Att: 7,000

Bordeaux 1 (Chamakh 5)
Nancy 0 Att: 24,728

Lens 2 (Keita 38, Hilton 61)
Marseille 0 Att: 39,274

Metz 0
Le Mans 0 Att: 18,130

Monaco 0
Auxerre 2 (Violeau 26, Pieroni 78) Att: 15,550

Sochaux 0
Paris SG 1 (Cisse 52) Att: 17,543

Toulouse 0
Nice 2 (Kone 17, Traore pen 30) Att: 18,620

Troyes 0
Saint-Etienne 0 Att: 14,532

Sunday, August 7

Lyon 1 (Carew 26)
Strasbourg 0 Att: 37,680

Rennes 0
Nantes 3 (Fae 14, Diallo 79, Bamogo 87) Att: 29,345

Saturday, August 13

Auxerre 1 (Pieroni 36)
Bordeaux 0 Att: 14,000

Le Mans 4 (De Melo pen 10, 32, Lucau 55, Bangoura 78)
Rennes 0 Att: 10,732

Lille 1 (Debuchy 69)
Troyes 2 (Nivet pen 2, Dallet 44) Att: 11,746

Nancy 1 (Zerka 46)
Lens 2 (Diarra 15, Dindane 20) Att: 16,803

Nantes 0
Ajaccio 2 (Edson 56, Rocchi 73) Att: 31,500

Nice 1 (Traore 44)
Sochaux 2 (Ilan pen 74, 76) Att: 13,545

Paris SG 2 (Pauleta 44, 62)
Toulouse 0 Att: 41,341

Saint-Etienne 2 (Piquionne 26, 32)
Metz 0 Att: 28,996

Sunday, August 14

Marseille 1 (Taiwo 7)
Lyon 1 (Carew 35) Att: 56,000

Strasbourg 1 (Le Pen 90)
Monaco 2 (Squillaci 49, Chevanton 79) Att: 22,969

Saturday, August 20

Ajaccio 0
Le Mans 0 Att: 6,500

Bordeaux 1 (Cheyrou 58)
Monaco 0 Att: 30,663

Lens 7 (Cousin 12, 57, Thomert 14, 38, Jussie 67, 75, Demont 73)
Auxerre 0 Att: 30,636

Lyon 1 (Cacapa 90)
Nancy 0 Att: 39,938

Metz 0
Strasbourg 0 Att: 19,626

Nice 1 (Bagayoko 7)
Nantes 1 (Fae 46) Att: 13,544

Rennes 3 (Utaka 8, Frei 39, Kallstrom 54)
Marseille 2 (Niang 1, Lamouchi 31) Att: 29,490

Sochaux 0
Lille 0 Att: 13,153

Sunday, August 21

Toulouse 1 (Moreira 41)
Saint-Etienne 1 (Hellebuyck 59) Att: 21,906

Troyes 1 (Dallet 49)
Paris SG 1 (Pauleta 37) Att: 17,507

Wednesday, August 24

Lille 0
Toulouse 0 Att: 12,525

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paris SG	4	3	1	0	8	2	10
Lyon	4	3	1	0	5	2	10
Lens	4	3	0	1	11	3	9
Bordeaux	4	3	0	1	4	1	9
Nantes	4	2	1	1	6	3	7
Auxerre	4	2	1	1	3	7	7
Ajaccio	4	1	3	0	5	3	6
Saint-Etienne	4	1	3	0	3	1	6
Troyes	4	1	3	0	4	3	6
Lille	5	1	3	1	5	5	6
Monaco	4	2	0	2	3	4	6
Le Mans	4	1	2	1	5	2	5
Nice	4	1	2	1	5	4	5
Toulouse	5	1	2	2	2	5	5
Sochaux	4	1	1	2	2	3	4
Rennes	4	1	0	3	3	10	3
Strasbourg	4	0	2	2	1	3	2
Metz	4	0	2	2	1	6	2
Marseille	4	0	1	3	3	8	1
Nancy	4	0	0	4	1	5	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS
3 John Carew (Lyon)
3 Sebastien Dallet (Troyes)
3 Tulio De Melo (Le Mans)
3 Pauleta (Paris SG)

GERMANY

Friday, August 5

Bayern Munich 3 (Hargreaves 28, Makaay 86, 89)
Monchengladbach 0 Att: 66,000

Saturday, August 6

Duisburg 1 (Ahanfouf 31)
Stuttgart 1 (Cacau 5) Att: 28,443

Hamburg 3 (Mpenza 3, Barbarez pen 45, 60)
Nurnberg 0 Att: 41,877

Hannover 2 (Dabrowski 66, Tarnat 87)
Hertha 2 (Marcelinho 49, Wichniarek 54) Att: 40,473

Koln 1 (Schlicke 87)
Mainz 0 Att: 50,000

Werder Bremen 5 (Klose 1, 82, Klasnic 18, 85, Baumann 36)
Arminia Bielefeld 2 (Krupnikovic 12, Zuma 31) Att: 38,156

Wolfsburg 2 (Klimowicz 9, Hofland 83)
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Smolarek 56, Koller 82) Att: 23,368

Sunday, August 7

Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Vasovski 7)
Bayer Leverkusen 4 (Berbatov 24, Voronin 49, Schneider 56, Krzynowek 60) Att: 42,000

Schalke 2 (Larsen 80, Krstajic 86)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Altintop 33) Att: 61,210

Saturday, August 13

Arminia Bielefeld 0
Hamburg 2 (Barbarez pen 79, Van der Vaart 90) Att: 23,425

Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Berbatov pen 31, Babic 82)
Bayern Munich 5 (Ballack 3, Makaay 11, 57, 60, Karimi 35) Att: 22,500

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Smolarek 17)
Schalke 2 (Kuranyi 23, 58) Att: 81,264

Hertha 2 (Schroder 53, Van Lent og 78)
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Att: 49,416

Kaiserslautern 5 (Altintop 3, 58, 81, Lembi 28, Sanogo 68)
Duisburg 3 (Mohrle 23, 63, Ahanfouf 66) Att: 30,111

Monchengladbach 1 (Bogelund 90)
Wolfsburg 1 (Hanke 41) Att: 41,026

Nurnberg 1 (Mintal 90)
Hannover 1 (Brdaric 8) Att: 28,349

Sunday, August 14
Mainz 0
Werder Bremen 2 (Klasnic 21, Klose 62) Att: 20,300

Stuttgart 2 (Streller 58, Tiffert 69)
Koln 3 (Feulner 9, Streit 47, 55) Att: 49,000

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	2	2	0	0	8	2	6
Werder Bremen	2	2	0	0	7	2	6
Hamburg	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Koln	2	2	0	0	4	2	6
Schalke	2	2	0	0	4	2	6
Hertha	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Kaiserslautern	2	1	0	1	6	5	3
B Leverkusen	2	1	0	1	6	6	3
Hannover	2	0	2	0	3	3	2
Wolfsburg	2	0	2	0	3	3	2
B Dortmund	2	0	1	1	3	4	1
Stuttgart	2	0	1	1	3	4	1
Duisburg	2	0	1	1	4	6	1
M'gladbach	2	0	1	1	1	4	1
Nurnberg	2	0	1	1	1	4	1
Mainz	2	0	0	2	0	3	0
A Bielefeld	2	0	0	2	2	7	0
Eintracht F'furt	2	0	0	2	1	6	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS
5 Roy Makaay (Bayern Munich)
4 Halil Altintop (Kaiserslautern)

LEAGUE CUP – Final

Aug 2 - Zentralstadion, Leipzig
Stuttgart 0
Schalke 1 (Kuranyi 10)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 40,500. **Ref:** Wagner
Sent off: Kuranyi 66min, Lincoln 90min (both Schalke)

HOLLAND

Friday, August 12
AZ 3 (Arveladze 3, 49, Sektioui 74)
Sparta 0 Att: 8,583

Saturday, August 13
Heracles 1 (Sluijter 87)
PSV 1 (Cocu 84) Att: 8,100

Roda JC 2 (Sonko 33, Kone 79)
Twente 0 Att: 12,700

Vitesse 2 (Esajas 33, Janssen 80)
Heerenveen 2 (Huntelaar 66, Hansson 82) Att: 18,504

Willem II 1 (Reuser 57)
RKC 2 (Hoogendorp 9, 54) Att: 10,850

Sunday, August 14
Feyenoord 2 (Pardo 24, Kuijt 71)
NAC 0 Att: 35,000

Groningen 1 (Cornelisse 86)
RBC 0 Att: 12,100

NEC 0
Utrecht 0 Att: 11,500

Friday, August 19
NAC 1 (Vonlanthen 87)
Willem II 0 Att: 13,760

Saturday, August 20
Den Haag 1 (Den Ouden 63)
Heracles 2 (Hirayama 77, 84) Att: 6,712

Heerenveen 5 (Yildirim 45, Samaras 50, Pranjic 54, Huntelaar 57, 77)
Roda JC 4 (Waterman og 15, Kone 45, Van Dijk pen 80, Sergio 82) Att: 20,100

RBC 0
Ajax 2 (Pienaar 59, Rosenberg 85) Att: 5,000

Twente 0
NEC 1 (Tininho 81) Att: 13,000

Sunday, August 21
PSV 2 (Farfan 32, Cocu 45)
Vitesse 1 (Alex og 21) Att: 32,600

RKC 2 (De Ceulaer 48, Martens 76)
Groningen 1 (Lindgren 29) Att: 4,600

Sparta 1 (Van den Bergh 19)
Feyenoord 3 (Kuijt 44, Pardo 53, Ghaly 57) Att: 11,000

Utrecht 1 (Di Tommaso 44)
AZ 2 (Van Galen 49, 74) Att: 17,500

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AZ	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Feyenoord	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
RKC	2	2	0	0	4	2	6
Heerenveen	2	1	1	0	7	6	4
Heracles	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
PSV	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
NEC	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Ajax	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Roda JC	2	1	0	1	6	5	3
Groningen	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
NAC	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Vitesse	2	0	1	1	3	4	1
Utrecht	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Den Haag	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Willem II	2	0	0	2	1	3	0
RBC	2	0	0	2	0	3	0
Twente	2	0	0	2	0	3	0
Sparta	2	0	0	2	1	6	0

LEADING GOALSCORER
3 Klaas Jan Huntelaar (Heerenveen)

HUNGARY

July 30: Tatabanya 1 Papa 1; Rakospalota 1 MTK 2; Vasas 1 Gyor 2; Debrecen 2 Zalaegerszeg 1; Pecs 2 Kaposvar 1; Sopron 1 Honved 1.
July 31: Diosgyor 0 Ujpest 1; Ferencvaros 0 Fehervar 1.
Aug 6: Ujpest 2 Vasas 2; Gyor 2 Rakospalota 2; MTK 2 Pecs 0; Zalaegerszeg 3 Tatabanya 0; Papa 1 Sopron 2; Diosgyor 1 Fehervar 0.
Aug 7: Honved 3 Ferencvaros 1.
Aug 20: Rakospalota 2 Ujpest 3; Tatabanya 1 Kaposvar 0; Debrecen 2 MTK 2; Sopron 0 Zalaegerszeg 1; Pecs 0 Gyor 1.
Aug 21: Fehervar 3 Honved 0; Ferencvaros 3 Papa 3; Vasas 2 Diosgyor 0.

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MTK	3	2	1	0	6	3	7
Ujpest	3	2	1	0	6	4	7
Gyor	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Zalaegerszeg	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
Fehervar	3	2	0	1	4	1	6
Vasas	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Debrecen	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Sopron	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Honved	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Tatabanya	3	1	1	1	2	4	4
Pecs	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Diosgyor	3	1	0	2	1	3	3
Papa	3	0	2	1	5	6	2
Rakospalota	3	0	1	2	5	7	1
Ferencvaros	3	0	1	2	4	7	1
Kaposvar	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

ITALY

SUPER CUP

Aug 20 - Stadio Delle Alpi, Turin
Juventus 0
Inter 1 (Veron 95)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 0-0. **Att:** 35,246.
Ref: De Santis

NORWAY

July 30: Lyn 1 Lillestrom 0; Brann 1 Valerenga 2.
July 31: Viking 2 Fredrikstad 1; Rosenborg 2 Bodo/Glimt 0; Ham-Kam 3 Tromso 2; Start 1 Molde 0; Odd Grenland 2 Aalesund 1.
Aug 3: Fredrikstad 5 Rosenborg 1; Tromso 1 Brann 1; Bodo/Glimt 5 Odd Grenland 1; Aalesund 1 Ham-Kam 1; Lillestrom 2 Viking 0; Start 1 Lyn 1.
Aug 6: Valerenga 1 Tromso 1.
Aug 7: Ham-Kam 2 Bodo/Glimt 0; Odd Grenland 2 Fredrikstad 1; Brann 0 Aalesund 0; Molde 1 Lyn 3; Rosenborg 1 Lillestrom 2.
Aug 8: Viking 1 Start 1.
Aug 13: Fredrikstad 1 Ham-Kam 1; Lillestrom 2 Odd Grenland 3; Aalesund 0 Valerenga 2; Start 5 Rosenborg 2.
Aug 14: Tromso 2 Molde 1; Bodo/Glimt 2 Brann 1; Lyn 2 Viking 1.

NORWAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Start	18	11	5	2	35	19	38
Valerenga	17	10	4	3	28	17	34
Lyn	18	8	7	3	26	16	31
Viking	18	9	4	5	27	22	31
Lillestrom	18	9	3	6	27	23	30
Brann	18	7	5	6	32	22	26
Fredrikstad	18	6	5	7	27	26	23
Ham-Kam	18	6	4	8	20	24	22
Rosenborg	18	6	3	9	31	32	21
Odd Grenland	18	6	3	9	17	34	21
Molde	17	5	3	9	22	33	18
Tromso	18	3	8	7	19	24	17
Bodo/Glimt	18	4	4	10	21	29	16
Aalesund	18	3	6	9	16	27	15

POLAND

July 29: Lech 1 Arka 1.
July 30: Gornik L 0 Legia 0; Gornik Z 0 Groclin 0; Polonia 0 Wisla P 1; Wisla K 3 Belchatow 0; Zaglebie 1 Pogon 1; Korona 0 Odra 1.
July 31: Cracovia 1 Amica 0.
Aug 5: Belchatow 0 Legia 3; Groclin 2 Wisla K 4.
Aug 6: Lech 3 Wisla P 2; Gornik Z 3 Cracovia 0; Polonia 1 Zaglebie 1; Arka 1 Gornik L 1; Odra 0 Amica 4.
Aug 7: Pogon 4 Korona 2.
Aug 20: Wisla P 1 Arka 1; Legia 0 Groclin 2; Korona 3 Polonia 2; Gornik Z 1 Odra 1; Gornik L 0 Belchatow 2; Zaglebie 4 Lech 5.
Aug 21: Amica 4 Pogon 1.

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Amica	4	2	1	1	10	4	7
Wisla K	3	2	1	0	8	3	7
Lech	4	2	1	1	10	9	7
Pogon	4	2	1	1	8	7	7
Gornik Z	4	1	3	0	4	1	6
Legia	4	1	2	1	3	2	5
Groclin	4	1	2	1	6	6	5
Odra	4	1	2	1	2	5	5
Arka	4	0	4	0	3	3	4
Polonia	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
Korona	4	1	1	2	5	7	4
Wisla P	4	1	1	2	4	6	4
Cracovia	3	1	1	1	1	3	4
Belchatow	4	1	1	2	2	6	4
Zaglebie	4	0	3	1	6	7	3
Gornik L	4	0	3	1	2	4	3

PORTUGAL

Friday, August 19
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Rogerio 39, Deivid 63)
Belenenses 1 (Pinheiro 58)

Saturday, August 20
Academica 0
Benfica 0

Boavista 0
Setubal 0

Sunday, August 21
Gil Vicente 1 (Marcos Antonio 51)
Maritimo 0

Guimaraes 0
Naval 2 (Bruno Fogaca 62, Lito 74)

Pacos Ferreira 0
Nacional 1 (Andre Pinto 53)

Penafiel 0
Rio Ave 2 (Cleiton 65, Milhazes pen 81)

FC Porto 1 (Ricardo Costa 57)
Estrela Amadora 0

Monday, August 22
Uniao Leiria 0
Sporting Braga 1 (Cesinha 8)

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Naval	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Rio Ave	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Sporting Lisbon	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Gil Vicente	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Nacional	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
FC Porto	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Sporting Braga	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Academica	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Benfica	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Boavista	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Setubal	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Belenenses	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
E Amadora	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Maritimo	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Pacos Ferreira	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Uniao Leiria	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Guimaraes	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Penafiel	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

ROMANIA

Aug 5: Jiul 0 Gloria 2; National 1 Bacau 0.
Aug 6: Arges 0 Steaua 1; Vaslui 0 Rapid 1; Sportul 1 CFR Cluj 1.
Aug 7: Pandurii 1 Farul 2; Otelul 1 Dinamo 4; Poli Timisoara 3 Poli Iasi 0.
Aug 12: Poli Iasi 0 Otelul 1; Bacau 1 Poli Timisoara 0.
Aug 13: Gloria 1 Vaslui 1; CFR Cluj 0 Jiul 0; Farul 2 Sportul 2.
Aug 14: Dinamo 3 Pandurii 0; Steaua 4 National 0; Rapid 1 Arges 1.
Aug 19: Arges 2 Gloria 0; Vaslui 0 CFR Cluj 3; Jiul 1 Sportul 3.
Aug 20: Poli Timisoara 0 Steaua 0; National 1 Rapid 0.
Aug 21: Dinamo 0 Farul 1; Pandurii 0 Poli Iasi 1; Otelul 0 Bacau 0.

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Steaua	3	2	1	0	5	0	7
Farul	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Dinamo	3	2	0	1	7	2	6
National	3	2	0	1	2	4	6
CFR Cluj	3	1	2	0	4	1	5
Sportul	3	1	2	0	6	4	5
Poli Timisoara	3	1	1	1	3	1	4
Arges	3	1	1	1	3	2	4
Gloria	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Rapid	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Bacau	3	1	1	1	1	1	4
Otelul	3	1	1	1	2	4	4
Poli Iasi	3	1	0	2	1	4	3
Jiul	3	0	1	2	1	5	1
Vaslui	3	0	1	2	1	5	1
Pandurii	3	0	0	3	1	6	0

RUSSIA

July 30: Terek 0 Zenit 0; Rostov 0 Saturn 0; Amkar 0 Spartak 0; Rubin 1 FC Moscow 1; Lokomotiv 3 CSKA 2.
July 31: Tom 4 Kryliya Sovetov 2; Alaniya 2 Torpedo 2; Shinnik 2 Dinamo 1.
Aug 3: CSKA 1 FC Moscow 1.
Aug 6: Saturn 0 Dinamo 1; Shinnik 1 Alaniya 0; Torpedo 2 Terek 1; Zenit 1 Tom 0; Kryliya Sovetov 2 CSKA 2; Rubin 3 Lokomotiv 1.
Aug 7: FC Moscow 1 Amkar 0; Spartak 2 Rostov 0.
Aug 10: Torpedo 0 CSKA 2.
Aug 20: Rostov 1 FC Moscow 0; Dinamo 0 Spartak 1.
Aug 21: Tom 1 Torpedo 1; Terek 0 Shinnik 1; Alaniya 1 Saturn 1; Amkar 1 Rubin 0; CSKA 1 Zenit 1.

RUSSIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lokomotiv	21	12	8	1	31	9	44
CSKA	21	10	7	4	33	14	37
Zenit	21	10	7	4	32	18	37
Spartak	20	9	6	5	30	19	33
Rubin	20	8	8	4	23	18	32
FC Moscow	20	8	7	5	20	12	31
Shinnik	20	7	8	5	16	16	29
Torpedo	21	6	9	6	23	21	27
Dinamo	20	8	1	11	21	30	25
Amkar	20	4	11	5	15	22	23
Saturn	20	5	7	8	14	15	22
Tom	20	4	8	8	14	21	20
Kryliya Sovetov	20	4	8	8	19	29	20
Alaniya	20	4	7	9	16	29	19
Terek	20	4	4	12	11	28	16
Rostov	20	3	6	11	11	28	15

SCOTLAND

Saturday, July 30
Dundee Utd 1 (Miller 7)
Aberdeen 1 (Nicholson 48) Att: 12,404

Falkirk 0
Inverness 2 (Brewster 57, 82) Att: 4,561

Hibernian 1 (O'Connor 74)
Dunfermline 1 (Shields 12) Att: 13,010

Kilmarnock 2 (Naismith 11, Greer 74)
Hearts 4 (Skacel 12, Bednar 46, Mikoliunas 61, Hartley pen 89) Att: 7,487

Motherwell 4 (Kerr 20, Hamilton 58, McDonald 60, Kinniburgh 84)
Celtic 4 (Hartson 14, 32, pen 44, Beattie 90) Att: 9,903

Sunday, July 31
Rangers 3 (Prso 23, Pierre-Fanfan 53, Lovenkrands 90)
Livingston 0 Att: 49,613

Saturday, August 6
Aberdeen 1 (Anderson 34)
Kilmarnock 2 (Johnston 1, Naismith 72) Att: 13,661

Celtic 2 (Hartson 37, Beattie 88)
Dundee Utd 0 Att: 56,532

Inverness 0
Rangers 1 (Ferguson 69) Att: 7,512

Livingston 0
Falkirk 2 (Latapy 28, Duffy 72) Att: 4,052

Motherwell 1 (Hamilton 90)
Dunfermline 0 Att: 4,649

Sunday, August 7
Hearts 4 (Skacel 13, Hartley pen 58, Simmons 71, Mikoliunas 83)
Hibernian 0 Att: 16,459

Saturday, August 13
Celtic 3 (Hartson 49, Thompson 75, 90)
Falkirk 1 (Duffy pen 39) Att: 57,782

Dunfermline 0
Inverness 1 (Fox 42) Att: 5,005

Hibernian 3 (Murphy 40, Shiels 42, O'Connor 53)
Livingston 0 Att: 11,341

Kilmarnock 4 (Johnston 12, Boyd 19, 73, McDonald 61)
Motherwell 1 (Clarkson 42) Att: 5,035

Sunday, August 14
Aberdeen 3 (Anderson 30, Lovell 37, Smith 88)
Rangers 2 (Prso 39, Lovenkrands 49) Att: 18,182

Dundee Utd 0
Hearts 3 (Pressley 6, Bednar 12, Skacel 90) Att: 11,654

Saturday, August 20
Falkirk 0
Hibernian 2 (Brown 36, Riordan pen 63) Att: 6,268

Hearts 2 (Skacel 20, Pospisil 85)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 16,139

Inverness 2 (Brewster 40, 72)
Kilmarnock 2 (Nish 71, Boyd 74) Att: 4,119

Livingston 1 (Pereira 64)
Dunfermline 1 (Makel 44) Att: 4,522

Motherwell 4 (McCormack 6, McDonald 12, Fitzpatrick 49, Hamilton 57)
Dundee Utd 5 (Miller 42, 67, Fernandez 53, Brebner 71, 74) Att: 4,706

Rangers 3 (Prso 34, Buffel 51, Novo pen 88)
Celtic 1 (Maloney pen 86) Att: 49,699

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hearts	4	4	0	0	13	2	12
Rangers	4	3	0	1	9	4	9
Celtic	4	2	1	1	10	8	7
Kilmarnock	4	2	1	1	10	8	7
Inverness	4	2	1	1	5	3	7
Hibernian	4	2	1	1	6	5	7
Aberdeen	4	1	1	2	5	7	4
Motherwell	4	1	1	2	10	13	4
Dundee Utd	4	1	1	2	6	10	4
Falkirk	4	1	0	3	3	7	3
Dunfermline	4	0	2	2	2	4	2
Livingston	4	0	1	3	1	9	1

LEADING GOALSCORERS
5 John Hartson (Celtic)
4 Craig Brewster (Inverness)
4 Rudolf Skacel (Hearts)

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Aug 5: Zeta 1 Vozdovac 0.
Aug 6: Habitfarm* 0 Obilic 0; Hajduk K 2 Red Star 2; OFK 1 Rad 0; Partizan 2 Jedinstvo BP 0; Smederevo 1 Buducnost P 1; Vojvodina 0 Borac 1; Zemun 2 Buducnost BD 0.
Aug 13: Buducnost BD 1 Vojvodina 0; Buducnost P 3 Habitfarm 1; Vozdovac 2 Hajduk K 1.
Aug 14: Rad 0 Zemun 1; Borac 0 Zeta 1; Obilic 0 OFK 1; Partizan 2 Smederevo 1.
Aug 19: Habitfarm 0 Partizan 1.
Aug 20: Red Star 3 Vozdovac 1; Hajduk K 2 Borac 2; OFK 3 Buducnost P 0; Smederevo 1 Jedinstvo BP 0; Vojvodina 2 Rad 0; Zemun 2 Obilic 0; Zeta 1 Buducnost BD 0.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
OFK	3	3	0	0	5	0	9
Zemun	3	3	0	0	5	0	9
Partizan	3	3	0	0	5	1	9
Zeta	3	3	0	0	3	0	9
Red Star	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
Borac	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Smederevo	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Buducnost P	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Vojvodina	3	1	0	2	2	2	3
Vozdovac	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Buducnost BD	3	1	0	2	1	3	3
Hajduk K	3	0	2	1	5	6	2
Habitfarm*	3	0	1	2	1	4	1
Obilic	3	0	1	2	0	3	1
Jedinstvo BP	2	0	0	2	0	3	0
Rad	3	0	0	3	0	4	0

**Formerly Javor*

SPAIN

SUPER CUP
1st leg
Aug 13
Betis 0
Barcelona 3 (Giuly 47, Eto'o 52, Ronaldinho 63)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Dauden Ibanez

2nd leg
Aug 20
Barcelona 1 (Eto'o 14)
Betis 2 (Dani 23, 28)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 80,000. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco
Barcelona 4-2 on agg

SWEDEN

July 30: Malmo 1 Elfsborg 1.
July 31: Assyriska 0 Orgryte 1; Kalmar 0 Sundsvall 0.
Aug 1: Hammarby 2 Halmstads 1; Helsingborgs 2 Djurgardens 0; IFK Gothenburg 1 Hacken 0.
Aug 2: Landskrona 0 Gefle 1.
Aug 4: Djurgardens 2 Hammarby 2.
Aug 6: Kalmar 0 Malmo 2.
Aug 7: Assyriska 0 Landskrona 1; Orgryte 2 Halmstads 1.
Aug 8: Sundsvall 2 Gefle 2; Helsingborgs 0 IFK Gothenburg 2; Elfsborg 2 Hacken 0.
Aug 13: Hammarby 6 Helsingborgs 2; IFK Gothenburg 0 Kalmar 0; Landskrona 4 Elfsborg 1.
Aug 14: Gefle 1 Djurgardens 3; Halmstads 6 Sundsvall 0; Malmo 2 Assyriska 2; Hacken 1 Orgryte 2.
Aug 20: Orgryte 1 Malmo 1.
Aug 21: Djurgardens 3 Kalmar 1; Halmstads 1 Gefle 4.
Aug 22: Hacken 1 Hammarby 3; Sundsvall 5 Assyriska 0; Helsingborgs 1 Landskrona 0.
Aug 25: Elfsborg 0 IFK Gothenburg 2.

SWEDEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Djurgardens	19	11	4	4	39	22	37
IFK Gothenburg	19	10	6	3	24	10	36
Helsingborgs	19	10	3	6	28	28	33
Hammarby	19	9	5	5	34	22	32
Malmo	19	9	5	5	23	18	32
Kalmar	19	6	8	5	17	17	26
Elfsborg	19	7	5	7	26	29	26
Hacken	19	8	1	10	25	24	25
Orgryte	19	7	4	8	25	28	25
Gefle	19	7	3	9	20	25	24
Landskrona	19	6	4	9	20	32	22
Halmstads	19	6	3	10	28	29	21
Sundsvall	19	4	5	10	22	35	17
Assyriska	19	4	2	13	15	27	14

SWITZERLAND

July 30: Basle 2 Zurich 1; St Gallen 5 Thun 1; Grasshopper 1 Schaffhausen 1; Neuchatel Xamax 4 Yverdon 0.
Aug 6: Yverdon 1 Basle 2; Aarau 2 Neuchatel Xamax 0; Schaffhausen 1 St Gallen 1; Zurich 2 Thun 2; Young Boys 0 Grasshopper 3.
Aug 10: Young Boys 0 Aarau 0.
Aug 13: Aarau 1 Yverdon 1; Schaffhausen 3 Young Boys 2.
Aug 14: Thun 2 Grasshopper 1; St Gallen 3 Basle 3; Zurich 3 Neuchatel Xamax 2.
Aug 19: Neuchatel Xamax 0 Thun 2.
Aug 20: Yverdon 0 Schaffhausen 1; Basle 7 Aarau 2; Grasshopper 3 St Gallen 1.
Aug 21: Young Boys 3 Zurich 1.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	6	4	1	1	15	10	13
Thun	6	4	1	1	12	8	13
Grasshopper	6	3	1	2	13	10	10
Young Boys	6	3	1	2	11	8	10
Zurich	6	3	1	2	14	12	10
Schaffhausen	6	2	3	1	7	6	9
St Gallen	6	2	2	2	15	12	8
Aarau	6	1	2	3	6	14	5
Neuchatel X	6	1	1	4	8	11	4
Yverdon	6	0	1	5	4	14	1

TURKEY

Aug 5: Genclerbirligi 0 Fenerbahce 0.
Aug 6: Diyarbakirspor 1 Rizespor 0; Erciyesspor 1 Besiktas 1; Sivasspor 1 Malatyaspor 1; Trabzonspor 2 Kayserispor 1.
Aug 7: Denizlispor 1 Ankaraspor 1; Galatasaray 2 Konyaspor 1; Samsunspor 2 Gaziantepspor 3; Manisaspor 2 Ankaragucu 2.
Aug 12: Ankaragucu 0 Galatasaray 1.
Aug 13: Fenerbahce 2 Diyarbakirspor 2; Gaziantepspor 0 Sivasspor 0; Malatyaspor 0 Manisaspor 5; Rizespor 1 Samsunspor 2.
Aug 14: Ankaraspor 0 Genclerbirligi 0; Besiktas 2 Denizlispor 0; Kayserispor 1 Erciyesspor 2; Konyaspor 0 Trabzonspor 0.
Aug 20: Denizlispor 1 Kayserispor 3; Genclerbirligi 0 Besiktas 2; Samsunspor 1 Sivasspor 2; Trabzonspor 3 Ankaragucu 1.
Aug 21: Diyarbakirspor 1 Ankaraspor 2; Erciyesspor 0 Konyaspor 0; Galatasaray 5 Malatyaspor 2; Rizespor 1 Fenerbahce 2; Manisaspor 1 Gaziantepspor 2.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Galatasaray	3	3	0	0	8	3	9
Besiktas	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Trabzonspor	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Gaziantepspor	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Fenerbahce	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
Ankaraspor	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Erciyesspor	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Sivasspor	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Manisaspor	3	1	1	1	8	4	4
Diyarbakirspor	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Kayserispor	3	1	0	2	5	5	3
Samsunspor	3	1	0	2	5	6	3
Konyaspor	3	0	2	1	1	2	2
Genclerbirligi	3	0	2	1	0	2	2
Ankaragucu	3	0	1	2	3	6	1
Denizlispor	3	0	1	2	2	6	1
Malatyaspor	3	0	1	2	3	11	1
Rizespor	3	0	0	3	2	5	0

UKRAINE

July 30: Zakarpattya 1 Dynamo 2; Shakhtar 1 Kryvbas 0.
July 31: Metalist 2 Tavriya 0; Metalurh Z 3 FC Kharkiv 6; Arsenal 1 Dnipro 0; Stal 2 Volyn 2; Illichivets 0 Chornomorets 1; Vorskla 1 Metalurh D 1.
Aug 6: Metalurh D 3 Metalist 1; Dnipro 0 Stal 1; Tavriya 0 Shakhtar 3.
Aug 7: Chornomorets 1 Vorskla 2; FC Kharkiv 3 Arsenal 1; Kryvbas 1 Metalurh Z 0; Volyn 3 Zakarpattya 1.
Aug 8: Dynamo 1 Illichivets 1.
Aug 20: Metalist 1 Shakhtar 5.
Aug 21: Illichivets 1 Volyn 1; Vorskla 0 Dynamo 4; Metalurh D 3 Chornomorets 2; Metalurh Z 2 Tavriya 1; Arsenal 1 Kryvbas 1; Stal 0 FC Kharkiv 0; Zakarpattya 1 Dnipro 2.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	6	6	0	0	15	3	18
Dynamo	6	4	2	0	14	3	14
Metalurh D	6	3	3	0	12	4	12
Metalist	6	4	0	2	8	8	12
Volyn	6	3	2	1	9	6	11
Chornomorets	6	3	1	2	8	6	10
FC Kharkiv	6	2	2	2	13	10	8
Kryvbas	6	2	2	2	5	4	8
Dnipro	6	2	0	4	6	8	6
Illichivets	6	1	3	2	5	7	6
Tavriya	6	2	0	4	6	11	6
Arsenal	6	1	2	3	5	9	5
Vorskla	6	1	2	3	5	10	5
Stal	6	1	2	3	3	12	5
Metalurh Z	6	1	1	4	6	13	4
Zakarpattya	6	0	2	4	3	9	2

SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, August 5
Racing Club 0
Banfield 0

Saturday, August 6
Quilmes 1 (Caneo 90)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Spolli 56)

Rosario Central 1 (Diaz 56)
Olimpo 1 (Maggiolo 76)

San Lorenzo 3 (Saja pen 42, Bottinelli 82, Garcia 90)
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Castroman 28, Zarate 90)

Sunday, August 7
Boca Juniors 4 (Palacio 9, 82, Palermo 10, Diaz 13)
Gimnasia J 1 (Ramon 28)

Gimnasia LP 1 (Lobos 68)
Colon Santa Fe 0

Lanus 2 (Gioda 31, Fioretto 90)
Independiente 4 (Frutos pen 21, pen 80, Manrique 37, Pusineri pen 74)

River Plate 2 (Gallardo 8, Farias 90)
Tiro Federal 0

Friday, August 12
Velez Sarsfield 0
Argentinos Juniors 1 (Cordoba 24)

Saturday, August 13
Arsenal 1 (Gonzalez 40)
Gimnasia LP 1 (Goux 69)

Colon Santa Fe 0
Racing Club 2 (Estevez 49, Capria 81)

Newell's Old Boys 2 (Silva 68, Manso 76)
Tiro Federal 1 (Iuvale 89)

Sunday, August 14
Banfield 0
Quilmes 0

Boca Juniors 2 (Bilos 77, Barros Schelotto 90)
Rosario Central 2 (Alemanno 2, Cardozo og 79)

Estudiantes 0
San Lorenzo 1 (Lavezzi 55)

Gimnasia J 0
River Plate 0

Independiente 3 (Aguero 33, 83, Fabro 67)
Instituto 0

Olimpo 1 (Maggiolo 35)
Lanus 1 (Gioda 45)

Friday, August 19
Argentinos Juniors 2 (Carrario 70, Pisculichi 78)
Estudiantes 1 (Ortiz 85)

Saturday, August 20
Gimnasia LP 0
Velez Sarsfield 6 (Gracian 17, 61, Bravo 29, Somoza 42, Enria 46, 72)

Racing Club 3 (Simeone 32, Mirosevic 36, Capria 69)
Arsenal 1 (Hirsig 39)

Tiro Federal 0
Banfield 1 (Lujambio 31)

Sunday, August 21
Instituto 0
Olimpo 0

Lanus 1 (Manicero 88)
Boca Juniors 1 (Gioda og 35)

Quilmes 4 (Alessandria 4, Caneo pen 31, Choy 42, Risso 56)
Colon Santa Fe 2 (Ramirez 20, Moreno y Fabianesi pen 67)

River Plate 2 (Barrado 22, Santana 85)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Ortega 45)

Rosario Central 3 (Villa 33, 39, 73)
Gimnasia J 2 (Devallis 82, Quinteros 90)

San Lorenzo 1 (Montillo 73)
Independiente 1 (Frutos 15)

ARGENTINA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Independiente	3	2	1	0	8	3	7
Racing Club	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
River Plate	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
San Lorenzo	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Argentinos Jnrs	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Boca Juniors	3	1	2	0	7	4	5
Quilmes	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
Rosario Central	3	1	2	0	6	5	5
Banfield	3	1	2	0	1	0	5
Newell's OB	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Gimnasia LP	3	1	1	1	2	7	4
Velez Sarsfield	3	1	0	2	8	4	3
Olimpo	3	0	3	0	2	2	3
Lanus	3	0	2	1	4	6	2
Arsenal	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Instituto	2	0	1	1	0	3	1
Gimnasia J	3	0	1	2	3	7	1
Estudiantes	2	0	0	2	1	3	0
Tiro Federal	3	0	0	3	1	5	0
Colon Santa Fe	3	0	0	3	2	7	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS
3 Nicolas Frutos (Independiente)
3 Emanuel Villa (Rosario Central)

BRAZIL

July 30: Vasco da Gama 3 Sao Caetano 2; Cruzeiro 3 Fortaleza 0; Goias 3 Atletico Mineiro 1.
July 31: Ponte Preta 1 Internacional 1; Figueirense 1 Fluminense 1; Coritiba 1 Brasiliense 1; Santos 4 Corinthians 2; Botafogo 0 Flamengo 2; Paysandu 3 Parana 4; Juventude 2 Sao Paulo 1; Palmeiras 1 Atletico Paranaense 1.
Aug 3: Brasiliense 1 Cruzeiro 2; Sao Caetano 1 Juventude 1; Atletico Paranaense 1 Goias 0; Atletico Mineiro 2 Paysandu 2; Corinthians 3 Coritiba 0; Flamengo 1 Ponte Preta 0; Parana 2 Botafogo 0; Internacional 0 Santos 1.
Aug 4: Fortaleza 5 Figueirense 2; Fluminense 3 Vasco da Gama 2; Sao Paulo 3 Palmeiras 3.
Aug 6: Botafogo 2 Paysandu 0; Corinthians 0 Sao Caetano 2; Atletico Paranaense 5 Cruzeiro 4.
Aug 7: Parana 1 Santos 1; Juventude 1 Palmeiras 2; Vasco da Gama 2 Figueirense 1; Fortaleza 2 Flamengo 1; Brasiliense 0 Internacional 0; Sao Paulo 0 Goias 1; Ponte Preta 0 Coritiba 3; Atletico Mineiro 1 Fluminense 2.
Aug 10: Sao Caetano 3 Atletico Paranaense 2; Coritiba 1 Atletico Mineiro 0; Palmeiras 2 Ponte Preta 1; Paysandu 0 Vasco da Gama 2; Figueirense 3 Sao Paulo 1; Internacional 0 Corinthians 0; Cruzeiro 4 Botafogo 1.
Aug 11: Santos 1 Brasiliense 1; Flamengo 1 Parana 1; Goias 1 Juventude 0; Fluminense 2 Fortaleza 0.
Aug 13: Palmeiras 3 Internacional 2; Coritiba 2 Sao Caetano 2; Paysandu 2 Atletico Paranaense 1.
Aug 14: Goias 2 Flamengo 0; Ponte Preta 3 Corinthians 5; Vasco da Gama 2 Atletico Mineiro 1; Cruzeiro 0 Parana 1; Figueirense 2 Brasiliense 2; Sao Paulo 3 Fortaleza 2; Juventude 2 Fluminense 0; Botafogo 3 Santos 3.
Aug 20: Atletico Mineiro 2 Juventude 1; Atletico Paranaense 4 Sao Paulo 2; Sao Caetano 0 Cruzeiro 1.
Aug 21: Brasiliense 4 Ponte Preta 0; Internacional 3 Coritiba 2; Fluminense 2 Palmeiras 2; Corinthians 1 Goias 1; Parana 0 Vasco da Gama 0; Fortaleza 3 Botafogo 1; Flamengo 2 Paysandu 1; Santos 4 Figueirense 3.
Aug 24: Ponte Preta 0 Atletico Paranaense 2; Juventude 1 Corinthians 0; Paysandu 2 Santos 3; Cruzeiro 0 Flamengo 0; Palmeiras 2 Sao Caetano 1; Goias 1 Parana 1; Vasco da Gama 1 Brasiliense 0; Sao Paulo 1 Fluminense 1.
Aug 25: Coritiba 2 Fortaleza 0; Botafogo 0 Internacional 1; Figueirense 0 Atletico Mineiro 1.

BRAZIL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Corinthians	22	12	3	7	45	40	39
Santos	22	11	6	5	45	33	39
Goias	22	11	5	6	32	24	38
Parana	22	10	8	4	32	20	38
Internacional	22	11	4	7	35	30	37
Cruzeiro	22	10	7	5	41	30	37
Fluminense	22	10	6	6	33	26	36
Palmeiras	22	10	5	7	40	33	35
Ponte Preta	22	10	3	9	33	36	33
Botafogo	22	10	2	10	31	34	32
Coritiba	22	9	5	8	33	31	32
Sao Caetano	22	9	5	8	30	29	32
Juventude	22	9	5	8	33	34	32
Fortaleza	22	9	3	10	27	31	30
At Paranaense	22	8	4	10	35	34	28
Vasco da Gama	22	7	5	10	37	48	26
Brasiliense	22	6	8	8	30	33	26
Flamengo	22	6	6	10	24	31	24
Sao Paulo	22	5	7	10	31	36	22
At Mineiro	22	5	4	13	29	35	19
Figueirense	22	4	7	11	27	38	19
Paysandu	22	4	4	14	29	46	16

CHILE

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

July 29: Everton 3 San Felipe 1.
July 30: Palestino 1 Cobreloa 1; U de Chile 4 Puerto Montt 2; Coquimbo Unido 2 Colo Colo 4.
July 31: U de Concepcion 2 Rangers 1; Dep Melipilla 0 Santiago Wanderers 1; Cobresal 2 Huachipato 0; Dep La Serena 1 Union Espanola 1; Audax Italiano 6 Dep Concepcion 0; U Catolica 2 Dep Temuco 0.
Aug 6: Huachipato 2 U de Concepcion 0; Colo Colo 3 Audax Italiano 0; Union Espanola 2 Dep Melipilla 1; Coquimbo Unido 3 Dep Temuco 0; San Felipe 1 Palestino 1.
Aug 7: Puerto Montt 1 Cobresal 0; Rangers 1 U de Chile 3; Dep Concepcion 2 Dep La Serena 1; Cobreloa 1 Everton 1; Santiago Wanderers 0 U Catolica 2.
Aug 13: Audax Italiano 0 Coquimbo Unido 0; U de Concepcion 1 Colo Colo 2; Palestino 0 Dep Concepcion 2.
Aug 14: Cobresal 1 Santiago Wanderers 2; San Felipe 2 Huachipato 3; Everton 0 Union Espanola 0; U de Chile 0 Cobreloa 0; U Catolica 1 Puerto Montt 0; Dep Temuco 1 Dep Melipilla 0; Dep La Serena 0 Rangers 1.
Aug 20: Dep Concepcion 3 U de Chile 1; Union Espanola 3 U de Concepcion 2; Cobreloa 0 U Catolica 2; Coquimbo Unido 1 Cobresal 1.
Aug 21: Santiago Wanderers 0 Audax Italiano 2; Colo Colo 4 Dep Temuco 0; Huachipato 3 Everton 1; Rangers 2 San Felipe 1; Dep Melipilla 1 Dep La Serena 0; Puerto Montt 2 Palestino 0.

CHILE – CLOSING – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U Catolica	6	6	0	0	12	0	18
Dep Concepcion	6	3	2	1	9	10	11
Huachipato	6	3	1	2	8	6	10
Puerto Montt	6	3	0	3	6	8	9
San Felipe	6	1	2	3	10	11	5

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Chile	6	3	1	2	10	10	10
S Wanderers	6	2	1	3	4	10	7
Dep Temuco	5	2	0	3	2	9	6
Everton	6	1	2	3	7	10	5
Dep La Serena	6	0	3	3	4	7	3

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	6	3	1	2	9	7	10
Audax Italiano	6	2	1	3	8	8	7
Palestino	6	1	3	2	6	6	6
Cobreloa	6	1	3	2	5	6	6
Cobresal	4	1	1	2	4	4	4

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colo Colo	6	5	1	0	17	5	16
Union Espanola	4	2	2	0	6	4	8
U Concepcion	6	2	0	4	7	10	6
Dep Melipilla	6	2	0	4	4	7	6
Coquimbo U'do	5	1	2	2	6	6	5

COLOMBIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

July 30: Once Caldas 0 Indep Santa Fe 0.
July 31: At Nacional 1 Dep Pasto 0; Magdalena 0 Quindio 1; Dep Cali 2 Real Cartagena 2; Bucaramanga 0 America 2; Envigado 3 At Junior 0; Chico 2 Indep Medellin 1; At Huila 1 Pereira 2; Millonarios 2 Tolima 0.
Aug 3: Tolima 3 Once Caldas 1; Indep Santa Fe 1 At Nacional 2; Dep Pasto 1 Magdalena 1; Quindio 1 Dep Cali 1; Real Cartagena 3 Bucaramanga 0; America 1 Envigado 0; At Junior 2 Chico 1; Indep Medellin 4 At Huila 1; Pereira 0 Millonarios 2.
Aug 6: Millonarios 1 Indep Medellin 0.
Aug 7: At Huila 1 At Junior 2; Chico 1 America 0; Envigado 1 Real Cartagena 1; Bucaramanga 2 Quindio 0; Dep Cali 2 Dep Pasto 2; Magdalena 1 Indep Santa Fe 1; At Nacional 2 Once Caldas 1; Pereira 2 Tolima 0.
Aug 13: Tolima 1 At Nacional 1.
Aug 14: Indep Medellin 2 Pereira 0; Once Caldas 4 Magdalena 0; Indep Santa Fe 1 Dep Cali 3; Dep Pasto 1 Bucaramanga 0; Quindio 2 Envigado 0; Real Cartagena 2 Chico 1; America 2 At Huila 1; At Junior 4 Millonarios 3.
Aug 20: Dep Cali 3 Once Caldas 0.
Aug 21: Indep Medellin 0 Tolima 2; Pereira 2 At Junior 1; Millonarios 0 America 1; At Huila 2 Real Cartagena 2; Chico 0 Quindio 2; Envigado 2 Dep Pasto 0; Bucaramanga 3 Indep Santa Fe 0; Magdalena 2 At Nacional 2.

COLOMBIA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	8	7	0	1	12	3	21
Millonarios	8	6	0	2	14	6	18
Real Cartagena	8	4	4	0	16	8	16
Pereira	8	5	0	3	10	8	15
Dep Cali	8	4	3	1	16	9	15
Tolima	8	4	1	3	11	9	13
At Junior	8	4	1	3	12	15	13
At Nacional	8	3	4	1	10	8	13
Quindio	8	3	3	2	7	5	12
Envigado	8	3	2	3	10	8	11
Bucaramanga	8	3	1	4	9	7	10
Dep Pasto	8	2	3	3	6	9	9
Once Caldas	8	2	2	4	7	11	8
Indep Medellin	8	2	1	5	8	12	7
Chico	8	2	0	6	5	14	6
Indep Santa Fe	8	1	3	4	6	11	6
At Huila	8	1	1	6	9	16	4
Magdalena	8	0	3	5	7	16	3

ECUADOR

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

July 29: Dep Cuenca 0 LDU Quito 0.
July 30: Aucas 0 Olmedo 0.
July 31: El Nacional 2 LDU Loja 1; Dep Quito 2 Barcelona 3; Emelec 6 Espoli 1.
Aug 3: LDU Quito 1 Dep Quito 1; Espoli 0 Dep Cuenca 0; Barcelona 3 El Nacional 3; LDU Loja 1 Aucas 2; Olmedo 2 Emelec 0.
Aug 6: LDU Quito 3 Espoli 2; Aucas 0 El Nacional 3.
Aug 7: Dep Quito 1 Olmedo 0; Emelec 1 LDU Loja 1; Dep Cuenca 0 Barcelona 0.
Aug 13: LDU Loja 0 Dep Quito 1; Espoli 0 Aucas 2.
Aug 14: El Nacional 3 Emelec 0; Barcelona 1 LDU Quito 0; Olmedo 1 Dep Cuenca 1.
Aug 19: Dep Cuenca 3 LDU Loja 2.
Aug 20: Espoli 2 Barcelona 1; LDU Quito 1 Olmedo 2.
Aug 21: Dep Quito 2 El Nacional 4; Emelec 2 Aucas 1.

ECUADOR – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
El Nacional	5	4	1	0	15	6	13
Olmedo	5	2	2	1	5	3	8
Barcelona	5	2	2	1	8	7	8
Emelec	5	2	1	2	9	8	7
Dep Cuenca	5	1	4	0	4	3	7
Dep Quito	5	2	1	2	7	8	7
Aucas	5	2	1	2	5	6	7
LDU Quito	5	1	2	2	5	6	5
Espoli	5	1	1	3	5	12	4
LDU Loja	5	0	1	4	5	9	1

PARAGUAY

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Aug 5: Libertad 2 Cerro Porteno 3; General Caballero 1 Guarani 0.
Aug 6: Nacional 0 Tacuary 0.
Aug 7: 3 de Febrero 0 12 de Octubre 0; Olimpia 1 Sportivo Luqueno 1.
Aug 13: Nacional 3 3 de Febrero 0; Tacuary 3 Olimpia 2; Sportivo Luqueno 2 General Caballero 0.
Aug 14: Guarani 0 Libertad 1; Cerro Porteno 1 12 de Octubre 1.
Aug 19: 3 de Febrero 1 Cerro Porteno 2; 12 de Octubre 0 Guarani 2.
Aug 20: Libertad 5 Sportivo Luqueno 2.
Aug 21: General Caballero 2 Tacuary 4; Olimpia 1 Nacional 1.

PARAGUAY – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tacuary	3	2	1	0	7	4	7
Cerro Porteno	3	2	1	0	6	4	7
Libertad	3	2	0	1	8	5	6
Nacional	3	1	2	0	4	1	5
Sp Luqueno	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
Guarani	3	1	0	2	2	2	3
Gen Caballero	3	1	0	2	3	6	3
Olimpia	3	0	2	1	4	5	2
12 de Octubre	3	0	2	1	1	3	2
3 de Febrero	3	0	1	2	1	5	1

PERU

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

July 31: Alianza Lima 4 Sport Ancash 0; Coronel Bolognesi 0 Sporting Cristal 0; Union Huaral 1 Universitario 1; At Universidad 1 Alianza Atletico 0; Universidad CV 2 Melgar 0; Universidad SMP 3 Sport Boys 2.

PERU – OPENING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cienciano	24	16	3	5	37	21	51
Universitario	24	13	9	2	40	20	48
Alianza Lima	24	9	11	4	43	25	38
Sporting Cristal	24	9	9	6	34	28	36
C Bolognesi	24	8	11	5	25	20	35
Sport Ancash	24	10	4	10	28	33	34
Univ SMP	24	8	7	9	28	26	31
Sport Boys	24	8	7	9	31	34	31
Melgar	24	7	6	11	32	42	27
At Universidad	24	5	8	11	26	40	23
Univ CV	24	4	10	10	27	36	22
Union Huaral	24	4	9	11	24	32	21
Alianza Atletico	24	3	10	11	29	47	19

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Aug 6: Universidad CV 0 Union Huaral 1; Universidad SMP 2 Cienciano 0; Sport Boys 0 Alianza Atletico 0; Coronel Bolognesi 3 Melgar 0; At Universidad 3 Universitario 1.
Aug 7: Sport Ancash 0 Sporting Cristal 0.

Aug 10: Cienciano 1 Sport Ancash 2; Melgar 2 Universidad CV 1; Sporting Cristal 0 Sport Boys 0; Union Huaral 0 Universidad SMP 2; Alianza Lima 1 Coronel Bolognesi 2.
Aug 13: Universidad CV 1 Alianza Lima 0; At Universidad 1 Sporting Cristal 2.
Aug 14: Sport Boys 1 Cienciano 1; Universidad SMP 7 Melgar 1; Sport Ancash 2 Union Huaral 0; Universitario 1 Alianza Atletico 0.
Aug 17: Alianza Atletico 3 At Universidad 1.
Aug 20: Alianza Lima 0 Universidad SMP 0; Universitario 0 Sporting Cristal 1.
Aug 21: Coronel Bolognesi 2 Universidad CV 1; Cienciano 3 At Universidad 1; Union Huaral 0 Sport Boys 2; Melgar 0 Sport Ancash 0.

PERU – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Univ SMP	4	3	1	0	11	1	10
C Bolognesi	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
Sport Ancash	4	2	2	0	4	1	8
Sporting Cristal	4	2	2	0	3	1	8
Sport Boys	4	1	3	0	3	1	6
Alianza Atletico	3	1	1	1	3	2	4
Cienciano	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
Melgar	4	1	1	2	3	11	4
Univ CV	4	1	0	3	3	5	3
Universitario	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
At Universidad	4	1	0	3	6	9	3
Union Huaral	4	1	0	3	1	6	3
Alianza Lima	3	0	1	2	1	3	1

URUGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Aug 20: Cerrito 2 Defensor 1; Paysandu 2 Wanderers 0; Danubio 0 Rentistas 1.
Aug 21: Rocha 2 Liverpool 1; Rampla Juniors 3 Dep Colonia 5; River Plate 0 Miramar Misiones 3; Fenix 1 Cerro 1.
Aug 25: Nacional 4 Plaza 1.

URUGUAY – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional	1	1	0	0	4	1	3
M Misiones	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Dep Colonia	1	1	0	0	5	3	3
Paysandu	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Cerrito	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Rocha	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Rentistas	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Cerro	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Fenix	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Penarol	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tacuarembo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Defensor	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Liverpool	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Danubio	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Rampla Jnrs	1	0	0	1	3	5	0
Wanderers	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Plaza	1	0	0	1	1	4	0
River Plate	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

VENEZUELA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Aug 6: Dep Tachira 1 Caracas 0.
Aug 7: Aragua 0 Trujillanos 0; UA Maracaibo 2 Monagas 1; Mineros Guayana 3 ItalMaracaibo 2; Estudiantes 1 Carabobo 2.
Aug 14: Estudiantes 0 Aragua 0; Carabobo 1 Mineros Guayana 1; ItalMaracaibo 2 Dep Tachira 3; Caracas 2 UA Maracaibo 0.
Aug 20: Dep Tachira 2 Carabobo 2.
Aug 21: Aragua 2 Monagas 1; Caracas 1 Trujillanos 0; UA Maracaibo 3 ItalMaracaibo 1.

VENEZUELA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Tachira	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Caracas	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
UA Maracaibo	3	2	0	1	5	4	6
Carabobo	3	1	2	0	5	4	5
Aragua	3	1	2	0	2	1	5
Mineros G'ana	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Estudiantes	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Trujillanos	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Monagas	2	0	0	2	2	4	0
ItalMaracaibo	3	0	0	3	5	9	0

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

July 30: Cruz Azul 2 Morelia 1; Monterrey 1 Pachuca 2; Veracruz 2 Atlas 1; Dorados 3 Atlante 1; Guadalajara 1 Jaguares 1; Necaxa 0 Toluca 0.
July 31: San Luis 2 Tecos UAG 1; America 3 Tigres 1; Santos 1 Pumas UNAM 2.
Aug 6: Toluca 2 San Luis 1; Atlante 0 Santos 0; Jaguares 1 Necaxa 1; Tigres 3 Dorados 1; Morelia 2 Monterrey 2; Atlas 0 Cruz Azul 1.
Aug 7: Pumas UNAM 1 Guadalajara 0; Pachuca 0 America 0; Tecos UAG 2 Veracruz 2.
Aug 13: Monterrey 1 Atlas 0; Cruz Azul 5 Tecos UAG 1; Guadalajara 3 Atlante 2; Veracruz 2 Toluca 3; Necaxa 2 Pumas UNAM 0.
Aug 14: San Luis 1 Jaguares 1; America 2 Dorados 1; Pachuca 1 Morelia 3; Santos 1 Tigres 4.
Aug 20: Toluca 2 Cruz Azul 1; Atlante 2 Necaxa 1; Jaguares 2 Veracruz 2; Tigres 1 Guadalajara 1; Morelia 1 America 2; Dorados 0 Santos 3; Atlas 3 Pachuca 2.
Aug 21: Pumas UNAM 0 San Luis 0; Tecos UAG 2 Monterrey 1.
Aug 24: America 2 Santos 1; Pachuca 1 Tecos UAG 0; San Luis 2 Atlante 2; Monterrey 2 Toluca 1; Cruz Azul 3 Jaguares 1; Guadalajara 1 Dorados 0; Veracruz 1 Pumas UNAM 1; Morelia 1 Atlas 0; Necaxa 3 Tigres 2.

MEXICO – OPENING – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	5	4	1	0	9	4	13
Necaxa	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Morelia	5	2	1	2	8	7	7
San Luis	5	1	3	1	6	6	6
Atlante	5	1	2	2	7	9	5
Tecos UAG	5	1	1	3	6	11	4

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	5	3	1	1	8	6	10
Pumas UNAM	5	2	2	1	4	4	8
Pachuca	5	2	1	2	6	7	7
Veracruz	5	1	3	1	9	9	6
Santos	5	1	1	3	6	8	4
Dorados	5	1	0	4	5	10	3

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruz Azul	5	4	0	1	12	5	12
Guadalajara	5	2	2	1	6	5	8
Tigres	5	2	1	2	11	9	7
Monterrey	5	2	1	2	7	7	7
Jaguares	5	0	4	1	6	8	4
Atlas	5	1	0	4	4	7	3

LEADING GOALSCORER
4 Richard Nunez (Cruz Azul)

UNITED STATES

Aug 6: Real Salt Lake 2 Chivas USA 1; New England Revolution 1 Kansas City Wizards 2; Chicago Fire 2 DC United 3; FC Dallas 2 MetroStars 2; Colorado Rapids 2 Los Angeles Galaxy 0; San Jose Earthquakes 2 Columbus Crew 1.
Aug 10: DC United 3 MetroStars 0; New England Revolution 4 Real Salt Lake 1; Chicago Fire 2 Kansas City Wizards 3; Chivas USA 0 Los Angeles Galaxy 1.
Aug 13: DC United 3 Chivas USA 0; Chicago Fire 2 Los Angeles Galaxy 1; FC Dallas 1 New England Revolution 2; Real Salt Lake 2 Kansas City Wizards 4; San Jose Earthquakes 1 Colorado Rapids 1.
Aug 14: MetroStars 2 Columbus Crew 1.
Aug 17: Colorado Rapids 2 New England Revolution 0.
Aug 19: Kansas City Wizards 3 Chicago Fire 0.
Aug 20: Columbus Crew 1 FC Dallas 0; DC United 2 Los Angeles Galaxy 3; Real Salt Lake 0 San Jose Earthquakes 1.
Aug 21: MetroStars 3 Chivas USA 3.

USA – EASTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
New England	23	12	6	5	40	25	42
Kansas City	24	11	8	5	43	31	41
Chicago Fire	25	12	3	10	41	41	39
DC United	23	11	5	7	38	26	38
MetroStars	24	8	9	7	38	35	33
Columbus	22	7	3	12	20	32	24

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
San Jose	23	11	8	4	34	25	41
FC Dallas	22	10	5	7	37	30	35
LA Galaxy	24	10	5	9	30	29	35
Colorado	23	8	4	11	29	28	28
Real Salt Lake	23	5	4	14	23	45	19
Chivas USA	24	3	4	17	25	51	13

LEADING GOALSCORERS
11 Jeff Cunningham (Colorado Rapids)
10 Jaime Moreno (DC United)
10 Carlos Ruiz (FC Dallas)
10 Taylor Twellman (New England Revolution)

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A
Aug 7: Ajax Cape Town (SAf) 0 Al Ahly (Egy) 0; Enyimba (Nig) 2 Raja Casablanca (Mor) 0.
Aug 20: Raja Casablanca 1 Al Ahly 1.
Aug 21: Enyimba 2 Ajax Cape Town 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Ahly	5	3	2	0	5	1	11
Enyimba	5	2	1	2	5	3	7
Raja C'blanca	5	1	2	2	3	5	5
Ajax Cape Town	5	0	3	2	2	6	3

Group B
Aug 6: Etoile Sahel (Tun) 2 ASEC Abidjan (IvC) 1.
Aug 7: Esperance (Tun) 1 Zamalek (Egy) 2.
Aug 20: Esperance 1 Etoile Sahel 1.
Aug 21: Zamalek 2 ASEC Abidjan 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zamalek	5	2	3	0	7	5	9
Etoile Sahel	5	1	4	0	5	4	7
Esperance	5	0	4	1	3	4	4
ASEC Abidjan	5	0	3	2	4	6	3

Top two in each group qualify for semi-finals

AFRICAN CONFEDERATION CUP

Group A
Aug 6: King Faisal Babes (Gha) 1 AS Marsa (Tun) 0.
Aug 7: FAR Rabat (Mor) 1 Fello Star Labe (Gui) 0.
Aug 20: Fello Star Labe 1 AS Marsa 2.
Aug 21: King Faisal Babes 1 FAR Rabat 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FAR Rabat	3	2	1	0	3	1	7
King Faisal B	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
AS Marsa	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Fello Star Labe	3	0	0	3	1	4	0

Group B
Aug 5: Ismaili (Egy) 1 Dolphin (Nig) 1.
Aug 7: Al Mokawloon (Egy) 2 FC 105 Libreville (Gab) 1.
Aug 19: Al Mokawloon 2 Ismaili 3.
Aug 21: Dolphin 3 FC 105 Libreville 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dolphin	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Ismaili	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Al Mokawloon	3	1	0	2	5	6	3
FC 105	3	0	0	3	1	6	0

Group winners qualify for Final

ASIA

JAPAN

Aug 20: Kashima Antlers 1 Sanfrecce Hiroshima 2; Urawa Reds 2 FC Tokyo 1; Kawasaki Frontale 2 Oita Trinita 1; Albirex Niigata 4 Gamba Osaka 2; Jubilo Iwata 3 Yokohama F Marinos 1; Cerezo Osaka 1 Shimizu S-Pulse 1; Vissel Kobe 1 Nagoya Grampus Eight 0.
Aug 21: Kashiwa Reysol 1 JEF United 2; Tokyo Verdy 1969 1 Omiya Ardija 1.
Aug 24: Kashima Antlers 7 Albirex Niigata 2; Urawa Reds 2 Vissel Kobe 2; JEF United 1 Cerezo Osaka 2; FC Tokyo 1 Nagoya Grampus Eight 1; Yokohama F Marinos 0 Kawasaki Frontale 2; Shimizu S-Pulse 1 Tokyo Verdy 1969 2; Gamba Osaka 3 Jubilo Iwata 1; Sanfrecce Hiroshima 2 Omiya Ardija 1; Oita Trinita 1 Kashiwa Reysol 1.

JAPAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kashima Antlers	20	13	3	4	39	21	42
Gamba Osaka	20	11	5	4	52	35	38
Sanfrecce H	20	9	7	4	28	15	34
Urawa Reds	20	9	6	5	32	20	33
Jubilo Iwata	20	9	4	7	31	22	31
JEF United	20	8	6	6	33	29	30
Grampus Eight	20	7	7	6	27	25	28
K'saki Frontale	20	8	3	9	27	25	27
Yokohama FM	20	7	6	7	24	26	27
Cerezo Osaka	20	7	6	7	25	30	27
Albirex Niigata	20	7	5	8	31	41	26
Omiya Ardija	20	7	4	9	24	28	25
Shimizu S-Pulse	20	4	10	6	22	22	22
FC Tokyo	20	5	7	8	25	26	22
Kashiwa Reysol	20	4	8	8	21	24	20
Tokyo Verdy	20	4	8	8	24	48	20
Oita Trinita	20	5	4	11	18	29	19
Vissel Kobe	20	3	7	10	21	38	16

SOUTH KOREA

SECOND STAGE

Aug 24: Daejeon 2 Daegu 1; Gwangju 0 Seoul 2; Ulsan 0 Incheon 1; Pohang 2 Chonbuk 0; Busan 1 Suwon 2.

SOUTH KOREA – SECOND STAGE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pohang	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Seoul	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Daejeon	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Suwon	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Incheon	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Bucheon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chunnam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Songnam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Busan	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Daegu	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Ulsan	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Chonbuk	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Gwangju	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

FIXTURES 2005-06

ITALY

Sat, August 27, 2005
Fiorentina v Sampdoria
Livorno v Lecce

Sun, August 28
Ascoli v Milan
Inter v Treviso
Juventus v Chievo
Lazio v Messina
Parma v Palermo
Reggina v Roma
Siena v Cagliari
Udinese v Empoli

Sun, September 11
Cagliari v Lazio
Chievo v Parma
Empoli v Juventus
Lecce v Ascoli
Messina v Fiorentina
Milan v Siena
Palermo v Inter
Roma v Udinese
Sampdoria v Reggina
Treviso v Livorno

Sun, September 18
Cagliari v Messina
Fiorentina v Udinese
Inter v Lecce
Juventus v Ascoli
Lazio v Treviso
Livorno v Roma
Parma v Empoli
Reggina v Chievo
Sampdoria v Milan
Siena v Palermo

Wed, September 21
Ascoli v Siena
Chievo v Inter
Empoli v Cagliari
Lecce v Fiorentina
Messina v Livorno
Milan v Lazio
Palermo v Reggina
Roma v Parma
Treviso v Sampdoria
Udinese v Juventus

Sun, September 25
Cagliari v Roma
Empoli v Lecce
Inter v Fiorentina
Lazio v Palermo
Livorno v Ascoli
Parma v Juventus
Reggina v Udinese
Sampdoria v Chievo
Siena v Messina
Treviso v Milan

Sun, October 2
Ascoli v Parma
Chievo v Treviso
Fiorentina v Livorno
Juventus v Inter
Lecce v Cagliari
Messina v Sampdoria
Milan v Reggina
Palermo v Empoli
Roma v Siena
Udinese v Lazio

Sun, October 16
Ascoli v Sampdoria
Cagliari v Milan
Empoli v Roma
Inter v Livorno
Juventus v Messina
Lazio v Fiorentina
Palermo v Chievo
Parma v Treviso
Reggina v Lecce
Siena v Udinese

Sun, October 23
Chievo v Cagliari
Fiorentina v Parma
Lecce v Juventus
Livorno v Reggina
Messina v Ascoli
Milan v Palermo
Roma v Lazio
Sampdoria v Siena
Treviso v Empoli
Udinese v Inter

Wed, October 26
Ascoli v Udinese
Cagliari v Livorno
Empoli v Milan
Inter v Roma
Juventus v Sampdoria
Lazio v Chievo
Palermo v Lecce
Parma v Messina
Reggina v Treviso
Siena v Fiorentina

Sun, October 30
Chievo v Empoli
Fiorentina v Cagliari
Lecce v Messina
Livorno v Parma
Milan v Juventus
Reggina v Lazio
Roma v Ascoli
Sampdoria v Inter
Treviso v Siena
Udinese v Palermo

Sun, November 6
Ascoli v Fiorentina
Cagliari v Treviso
Empoli v Reggina
Juventus v Livorno
Lazio v Inter
Messina v Roma
Milan v Udinese
Palermo v Sampdoria
Parma v Lecce
Siena v Chievo

Sun, November 20
Chievo v Ascoli
Fiorentina v Milan
Inter v Parma
Lecce v Siena
Livorno v Empoli
Reggina v Cagliari
Roma v Juventus
Sampdoria v Lazio
Treviso v Palermo
Udinese v Messina

Sun, November 27
Ascoli v Palermo
Cagliari v Sampdoria
Empoli v Lazio
Juventus v Treviso
Livorno v Chievo
Messina v Inter
Milan v Lecce
Parma v Udinese
Roma v Fiorentina
Siena v Reggina

Sun, December 4
Chievo v Milan
Fiorentina v Juventus
Inter v Ascoli
Lazio v Siena
Lecce v Roma
Palermo v Cagliari
Reggina v Parma
Sampdoria v Empoli
Treviso v Messina
Udinese v Livorno

Sun, December 11
Ascoli v Reggina
Fiorentina v Treviso
Inter v Milan
Juventus v Cagliari
Livorno v Lazio
Messina v Chievo
Parma v Sampdoria
Roma v Palermo
Siena v Empoli
Udinese v Lecce

Sun, December 18
Cagliari v Ascoli
Chievo v Udinese
Empoli v Fiorentina
Lazio v Juventus
Milan v Messina
Palermo v Livorno
Reggina v Inter
Sampdoria v Roma
Siena v Parma
Treviso v Lecce

Wed, December 21
Ascoli v Treviso
Fiorentina v Palermo
Inter v Empoli
Juventus v Siena
Lecce v Lazio
Livorno v Milan
Messina v Reggina
Parma v Cagliari
Roma v Chievo
Udinese v Sampdoria

Sun, January 8, 2006
Cagliari v Udinese
Chievo v Lecce
Empoli v Messina
Lazio v Ascoli
Milan v Parma
Palermo v Juventus
Reggina v Fiorentina
Sampdoria v Livorno
Siena v Inter
Treviso v Roma

Sun, January 15
Ascoli v Empoli
Fiorentina v Chievo
Inter v Cagliari
Juventus v Reggina
Lecce v Sampdoria
Livorno v Siena
Messina v Palermo
Parma v Lazio
Roma v Milan
Udinese v Treviso

Wed, January 18
Cagliari v Siena
Chievo v Juventus
Empoli v Udinese
Lecce v Livorno
Messina v Lazio
Milan v Ascoli
Palermo v Parma
Roma v Reggina
Sampdoria v Fiorentina
Treviso v Inter

Sun, January 22
Ascoli v Lecce
Fiorentina v Messina
Inter v Palermo
Juventus v Empoli
Lazio v Cagliari
Livorno v Treviso
Parma v Chievo
Reggina v Sampdoria
Siena v Milan
Udinese v Roma

Sun, January 29
Ascoli v Juventus
Chievo v Reggina
Empoli v Parma
Lecce v Inter
Messina v Cagliari
Milan v Sampdoria
Palermo v Siena
Roma v Livorno
Treviso v Lazio
Udinese v Fiorentina

Sun, February 5
Cagliari v Empoli
Fiorentina v Lecce
Inter v Chievo
Juventus v Udinese
Lazio v Milan
Livorno v Messina
Parma v Roma
Reggina v Palermo
Sampdoria v Treviso
Siena v Ascoli

Wed, February 8
Ascoli v Livorno
Chievo v Sampdoria
Fiorentina v Inter
Juventus v Parma
Lecce v Empoli
Messina v Siena
Milan v Treviso
Palermo v Lazio
Roma v Cagliari
Udinese v Reggina

Sun, February 12
Cagliari v Lecce
Empoli v Palermo
Inter v Juventus
Lazio v Udinese
Livorno v Fiorentina
Parma v Ascoli
Reggina v Milan
Sampdoria v Messina
Siena v Roma
Treviso v Chievo

Sun, February 19
Chievo v Palermo
Fiorentina v Lazio
Lecce v Reggina
Livorno v Inter
Messina v Juventus
Milan v Cagliari
Roma v Empoli
Sampdoria v Ascoli
Treviso v Parma
Udinese v Siena

Sun, February 26
Ascoli v Messina
Cagliari v Chievo
Empoli v Treviso
Inter v Udinese
Juventus v Lecce
Lazio v Roma
Palermo v Milan
Parma v Fiorentina
Reggina v Livorno
Siena v Sampdoria

Sun, March 5
Chievo v Lazio
Fiorentina v Siena
Lecce v Palermo
Livorno v Cagliari
Messina v Parma
Milan v Empoli
Roma v Inter
Sampdoria v Juventus
Treviso v Reggina
Udinese v Ascoli

Sun, March 12
Ascoli v Roma
Cagliari v Fiorentina
Empoli v Chievo
Inter v Sampdoria
Juventus v Milan
Lazio v Reggina
Messina v Lecce
Palermo v Udinese
Parma v Livorno
Siena v Treviso

Sun, March 19
Chievo v Siena
Fiorentina v Ascoli
Inter v Lazio
Lecce v Parma
Livorno v Juventus
Reggina v Empoli
Roma v Messina
Sampdoria v Palermo
Treviso v Cagliari
Udinese v Milan

Sun, March 26
Ascoli v Chievo
Cagliari v Reggina
Empoli v Livorno
Juventus v Roma
Lazio v Sampdoria
Messina v Udinese
Milan v Fiorentina
Palermo v Treviso
Parma v Inter
Siena v Lecce

Sun, April 2
Chievo v Livorno
Fiorentina v Roma
Inter v Messina
Lazio v Empoli
Lecce v Milan
Palermo v Ascoli
Reggina v Siena
Sampdoria v Cagliari
Treviso v Juventus
Udinese v Parma

Sun, April 9
Ascoli v Inter
Cagliari v Palermo
Empoli v Sampdoria
Juventus v Fiorentina
Livorno v Udinese
Messina v Treviso
Milan v Chievo
Parma v Reggina
Roma v Lecce
Siena v Lazio

Sat, April 15
Cagliari v Juventus
Chievo v Messina
Empoli v Siena
Lazio v Livorno
Lecce v Udinese
Milan v Inter
Palermo v Roma
Reggina v Ascoli
Sampdoria v Parma
Treviso v Fiorentina

Sun, April 23
Ascoli v Cagliari
Fiorentina v Empoli
Inter v Reggina
Juventus v Lazio
Lecce v Treviso
Livorno v Palermo
Messina v Milan
Parma v Siena
Roma v Sampdoria
Udinese v Chievo

Sun, April 30
Cagliari v Parma
Chievo v Roma
Empoli v Inter
Lazio v Lecce
Milan v Livorno
Palermo v Fiorentina
Reggina v Messina
Sampdoria v Udinese
Siena v Juventus
Treviso v Ascoli

Sun, May 7
Ascoli v Lazio
Fiorentina v Reggina
Inter v Siena
Juventus v Palermo
Lecce v Chievo
Livorno v Sampdoria
Messina v Empoli
Parma v Milan
Roma v Treviso
Udinese v Cagliari

Sun, May 14
Cagliari v Inter
Chievo v Fiorentina
Empoli v Ascoli
Lazio v Parma
Milan v Roma
Palermo v Messina
Reggina v Juventus
Sampdoria v Lecce
Siena v Livorno
Treviso v Udinese

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Controversial transfers

JOHAN CRUYFF was Ajax through and through, having come up through the club's youth ranks and played in three straight European Cup Final triumphs in the early 1970s. But in 1983, in his second spell with the Amsterdam club, he did the unthinkable, agreeing to move to Ajax's most ferocious domestic rivals, Feyenoord. Ajax had thought they could do without Cruyff; they were wrong. With Cruyff as influential as ever in his last season as a pro, Feyenoord won the League and Cup double in 1983-84.

Real Madrid players are not supposed to harbour hopes of wearing the colours of Barcelona. But after five years at the Bernabeu, midfielder Luis Enrique gladly moved to Camp Nou in 1996. There, he turned into one of the Catalan outfit's standard-bearers.

Eight years before Enrique's switch, German Bernd Schuster caused controversy a-plenty by going in the opposite direction.

But it was the tug-of-war between Real and Barcelona for Alfredo Di Stefano in the 1950s that was the mother of all controversial transfers, involving political intrigue and the shady work of go-betweens. With both clubs intent on signing Di Stefano from Colombian side Millonarios, the Spanish federation proposed that they share him, employing his talents in alternate seasons. But Barcelona pulled out of the deal, and from 1953 he was a Real man.

The most famous protest against a returning former player also involved Real Madrid and Barcelona. It came

Protest prompter...Baggio at Juventus

in November 2002, at Camp Nou, when the home fans, angry at former captain Luis Figo for having deserted them for Real Madrid two years earlier, threw a host of missiles – including mobile phones and the head of a suckling pig – as the Portuguese attempted to take a corner.

Roberto Baggio's £8million move from Fiorentina to Juventus on the eve of the 1990 World Cup sparked riots and protests in Florence and has caused bad blood between the two clubs ever since.

After starring for Spain at the 1995 World Youth Cup in Qatar, young winger Joseba Etxeberria provoked headlines, recriminations and counter-claims for many months by quitting Real Sociedad for Basque rivals Athletic Bilbao.

The rivalry between Borussia Dortmund and Schalke in the Ruhr region of western Germany is as intense as any in European football, and for fans of the two clubs, players should be loyal to one camp or another. So the blue touchpaper was well and truly lit five years ago with the announcement that attacking midfielder Andy Moller had traded the yellow of Dortmund for the blue of Schalke. In an instant, Moller became a target for the Dortmund boo-boys. But he had the last laugh, inspiring Schalke to the runners-up spot in the 2000-01 Bundesliga.

After eight years as a deep-lying attacker for Benfica, Portuguese international Joao Pinto caused a sensation in the summer of 2000 by moving to Lisbon foes Sporting on a free transfer. Benfica explained they had released the player because they could not afford his annual £1.5m salary, but the truth was that coach Jupp Heynckes did not want him. Benfica fans organised mass demonstrations about the departure and even the Minister of Sport became involved, calling on Joao Pinto to console him.

Turkish centre-back Alpay Ozalan knew he was not taking a soft option by leaving Besiktas for Istanbul rivals Fenerbahce in 1999. Fans who had once worshipped him, turned on him with a vengeance, talking of treachery.

Given a free transfer by Manchester United in 1973, Denis Law promptly moved on to Manchester City and scored the goal at Old Trafford that relegated United at the end of the 1973-74 season.

After a contract dispute with Panathinaikos, Greek national team keeper Antonis Nikopolidis made himself persona non grata in the green part of Athens by switching his allegiance to cross-town adversaries Olympiakos.

Swinish behaviour...a pig's head (by the flag) was thrown when Figo returned to Camp Nou with Real

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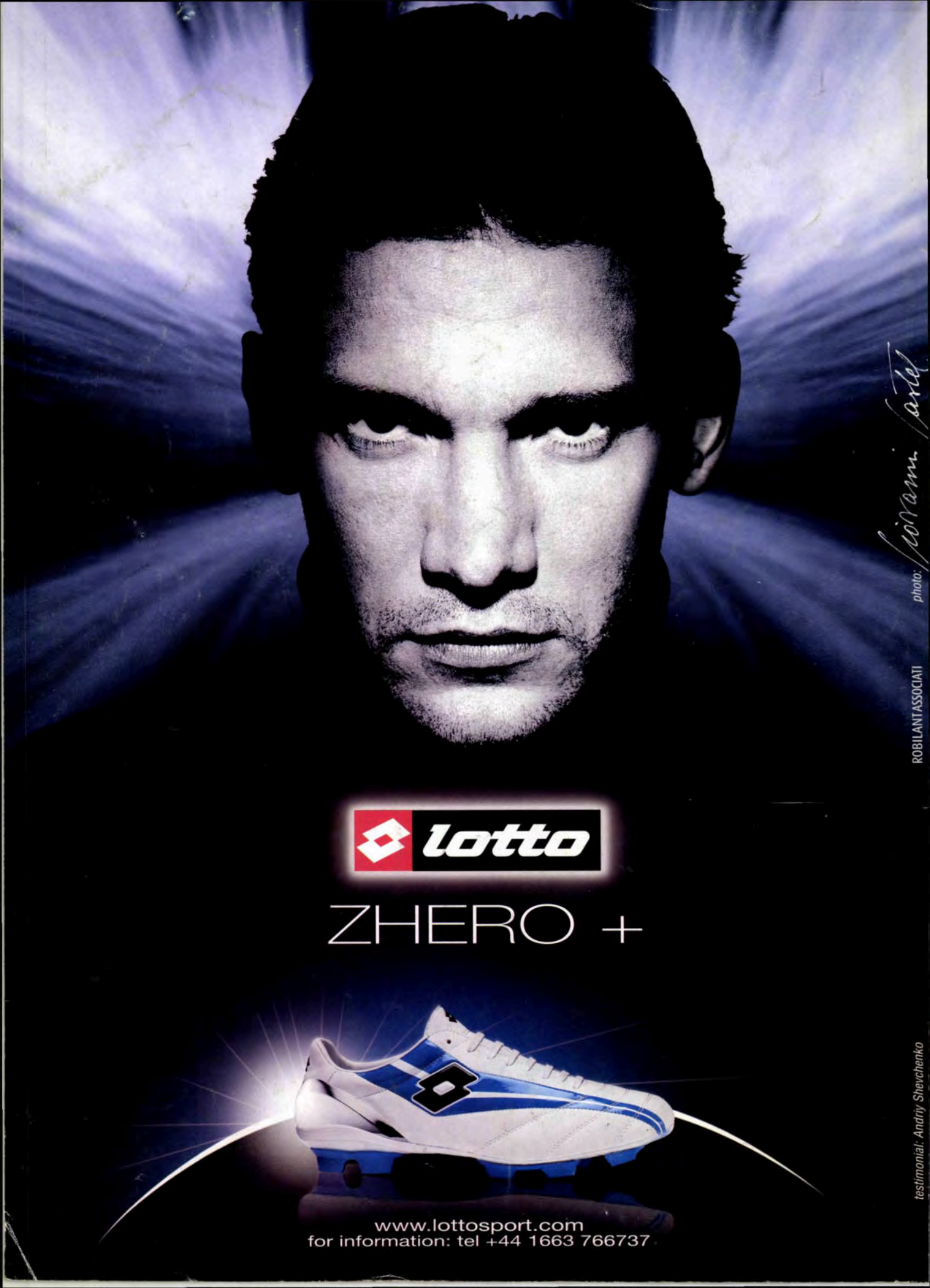
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